CULT OF THE MOTHER GODDESS

Fictions and Facts

Dr. Madhusudan Mishra

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Edited by

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Edited By **Dr. Madhusudan Mishra**

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Preface

Every creation owes its origin to some sort of power (*śakti*), either physical or mental. In the history of world religion, this creative ability is seen to have been exclusively vested with the female force. In the Indian context, the devotees of such creative power are known as *Śākta*-s and the process of worship adopted by them is called *Śāktadharma*. Scholars generally ascribe two reasons to the genesis of *Śāktadharma*, namely, the Aryan and the non-Aryan. Most of them opine that it is an advanced form of the pre-Vedic mother goddess adoration. Archaeological evidences accessible so far facilitate them in advancing such a view. Specifically, the beheaded women idols excavated from West Asia and Southern Russian plains embolden their observation, as more importance has been laid on the genital organ of the female powers in comparison to their other organs.

Anthropologists divide the aborigines into three categories: 1. haunters, 2. cattle rearers and 3. agriculturists. While the first two groups considered the women as the source of all creations, the third one discovered a new creative power i.e. the earth which has mammoth creative clout in the form of fertility. This resulted in establishing a universal unity between the feminine power and the earth. Thus, the entire humanity unequivocally admitted the role of the feminine energy and the mother earth behind all creations. Thus, the characteristics of women power were extended to the mother earth .As a result, we observe that in the folk tradition of Punjab the mother earth remains untouched for a week every month. In the Deccan during Navarātra

observance, the temple of the mother earth remains closed to the public. In Odisha, it is believed that the mother earth undergoes menstrual period for three days during the Raja festival. The earth is not tilled during these three days, i.e. the last day of the month of Jyeṣṭha and the first two days of Āṣāḍha. The most vibrant reflection of this tradition is observed in the Kāmākṣā temple of Assam where the temple of the goddess remains closed during her menstrual phase.

In the ancient Indian marriage ceremony the woman was being described as a fertile soil for sowing of seed. The *Atharvaveda* (XII.1.2) declared in no uncertain terms that the earth is the mother and human beings are her offspring. The *Manusmṛti* (9.33) described the women as soil and men as seeds (*kṣetrabhūtā smṛtā nārī bījabhūta smṛtaḥ pumān*). Sir John Marshall believes that the nude female idol discovered from Harappa is that of the mother earth. The thighs of the idol are wide open and make the genital organ quite distinct. A small tree is seen to be coming out of that idol. Marshall explains it as a representation of the power of reproduction and greenery of the mother earth. The ring stone discovered from Harappa, Taksasila, Rajaghat, Kosambi and Patna have been interpreted as the symbol of female reproductive organ. They appear as *Cakra*-s and *Yantra*-s in the mother goddess worship of post-Gupta period.

Similarly, the supremacy and significance of the feminine powers is also attested in the Vedic literature in a most prolific way. Female powers like Uṣā, Aditi, Sarasvatī, Īḍā, Vāk, Rodasī, Pṛthivī, Purandhrī, Anumiti etc. occupy pivotal positions in it. These deities get substantial elaboration in the later and post-Vedic literature. With the passage of time, the worship of the mother goddess became intimately associated with the religio-cultural set up of India. This resulted in influencing the atheist faiths like Jainism and Buddhism. Thus, we notice detailed description of different goddesses in Jaina texts like the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* and *Ācāra Dinakara*.

With the emergence of different sects in Buddhism, goddesses like Paththavi (Pṛthivī), Lakhi (Lakṣmī), Siri (Śrī) etc. got prominence in the Hīnayāna tradition. Similarly, in the Mahāyāna tradition, the five Dhyāni Buddha-s such as Amitābha, Akṣyobhya, Vairocana, Amoghasiddha and Ratnasambhava respectively got five female powers, namely, Paṇḍarā, Māmakī, Locanā, Tārā and Vajradhatviśvarī. As an outcome of the cultural amalgamation, Buddhist Tārā entered into the Hindu pantheon as one of the ten Mahāvidyā-s and the tribal deity Parṇaśabarī into the fold of Buddhism. During 5th-6th Century A.D. Śaktism got a firm foundation and therefore attempts were made to accord a śāstric sanction to it by reinterpreting the ancient texts and by composing new texts to cater to the need of the hour. Keeping pace with the number of the texts, the number of female divinities went on rising. Thus, we notice the concepts like tri-śakti, ṣaṇ-mātṛkā, sapta-mātṛkā, aṣṭa-mātṛkā, aṣṭa-caṇḍī, nava-durgā, daśa-mahāvidyā, ṣoḍaśa-vidyā, aṣṭādaśa-mātṛkā, catuḥṣaṣṭi-yoginī etc. The trend culminated in the setting up of one hundred and eight *śakti-pīṭha*-s in different parts of India. Thus, we observe that the cult of the mother goddess manifest itself in innumerable forms and features in the Indian subcontinent.

With a view to studying some such vital forms and features, the Department of Sanskrit of K.K.S. Women's College, Balasore, Odisha conducted a National Seminar during the year 2008 with the financial assistance of the University Grants Commission. I am, indeed, delighted that the edited version of the papers presented and discussed in the seminar is being brought out in the form of a book .While presenting the same in the hands of the scholars, I feel it a bounden duty to put on record my deep sense of gratitude to the scholars who have contributed the articles for this volume. I acknowledge, with appreciation, the financial assistance of the University Grants Commission in our

humble academic pursuit. Mr. Ravi Malhotra and Deepak Malhotra of Eastern Book Linkers, Delhi deserve my thanks for evincing keen interest in publishing the book with their usual care and swiftness. I must crave the indulgence of the scholars for the printing errors that might have crept into the book in spite of my best efforts.

Madhusudan Mishra

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1
Mother Goddesses in Vedic Literature

S.N. Mohapatra

I. Introduction

Mother goddesses played an important role in the Vedic pantheon. Although their number was quite few in comparison to that of the gods in the *Vedas*, yet their descriptions in different Vedic verses had drawn a distinct picture in the socio-cultural life of the ancient Aryans. The Rgvedic Aryans ascribed life and human faculties to many objects of the Nature and gave them various names and appellations. Worship of different forces of Nature formed a part of their religious belief. Thus, those divine characters possessed anger, jealousy and benevolence like ordinary human beings. As the mysteries of Nature were inexplicable to the Vedic Aryans, they believed that various divine forces were working behind them.

II. Nature of the Vedic Gods and Goddesses

The word that is generally used for a deity in the *Vedas* is *deva* which means bright or shining. Yāska has very rightly derived the word from the roots *div* (*dīptau*) and *dyu* (*dyotanāt*)[1]. And, as such, the word *devī* meaning resplendent stands for a goddess, being the feminine form of the word *deva* and being derived from the same roots. The term 'god' or 'goddess', apart from the poetic sense, would be best

1. देव: दानाद् दीपनाद् द्योतनाद् वा - Yāska's *Nirukta*, ed.V.G.Apte, Anandashrama Sanskrit Series, Poona, 1926.

rendered as 'divine'. A god is generally divine and there is no difference between one god and another. Each god represents all the gods as each god is an encompassing universal principle. The gods are one and many, many in one and one in many. They are unity, duality, multiplicity, totality, as a single fact.[1]

Even after an exhaustive study of the Vedic gods and goddesses, it becomes very difficult to say with certainty as to what they are and what they are not. They contain everything including each other; but are not reducible to anything. One cannot even give them a name. A name seems merely a means of their intimation and evocation. As a matter of fact, they have all names and no names at the same time. They are the principle of naming but not the things that can be named. When we name them it is only a symbolic indicator to point out their general character, which is never to be taken literally. As, for instance, Agni, the fire, is not simply the fire in the sense we normally use. It is the energy of transformation which is essentially the energy of consciousness. It is whatever burns, penetrates, perceives, creates, envisions, wills, aspires and ascends with force. It is symbolically a fire the way we speak of a fire of genius; it is like fire, but it is not simply a fire, even the fire seen by fertile but primitive imagination. It is the principle of light in general. So we can say that Agni is the Sun by day, the moon by night, fire in the home, the stars in the sky, the wind in the atmosphere, lightning in the cloud, whatever has light and heat is a form of Agni.[2]

From a close scrutiny of the character of the Vedic gods and goddesses it appears that most of them are of the same nature and they interpenetrate at many points. However,

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1. Frawley, David., *Hymns from the Golden Age*, Motilal Barnarsidass, Delhi, 1986, p.11.
2. Mohapatra S.N., *Concept of Jātavedas in Vedic Literature*, Eastern Book Linkers, Delhi, 2003.

keeping in view the main thrust of the paper we shall concentrate on the mother goddesses only. Uṣas, Sarasvatī and Pṛthivī are the three prominent Vedic Mother Goddesses. We also have some other nature – goddesses of less significance like Rātrī, Pṛṣṇi, Saraṇyu, Vāk and Iḍā etc. An attempt has been made in this article to discuss the role and significance of those feminine powers as reflected in the Vedic literature.

III. Mother Goddesses

UṢAS: Uṣas is the first and foremost among the mother goddesses for whom maximum number of invocations have been devoted in the *Vedas*. Keith[1] puts Uṣas under the category of Great-god as against the category of Minor gods. Yāska divides the Vedic gods into three categories and Uṣas is placed under the celestial one[2]. Perhaps this is because of the number of hymns attributed to her. As a matter of fact, Uṣas has been invoked in as many as twenty full hymns and the word Uṣas occurs about three hundred times in the Vedic *Saṁhitā*-s.[3]

The earliest invocation to her as the mother of all gods is found in the first *Maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*, where she is epithetised as *mātā* and *viśvavārā* meaning "the mother of gods" and "worshipped by all". Thus, the *mantra* goes:

माता देवानामदितेरनीकं यज्ञस्य केतुर्बृहती वि भाहि।
यशस्तिकृद् ब्रह्मणे नो व्युच्छा नो जने जनय विश्ववारे।।

(ऋग्वेद. १.११३.१९)[4]

In another Ṛgvedic verse, she is addressed as *mātā gavām ṛtāvarī*[5]. Here the word *gavām* like its origin *go* can be

1. Keith,A.B., *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads*, Harvard Oriental Series, Vol.31, Oxford University Press, London, 1925,pp.xiv-xv.
2. *Nirukta* of Yāska, *Daivatakāṇḍa*, ed. L.Sarup.New Delhi, 1982.
3. Kieth, *op.cit*, p.119.
4. *cf. mātā ca me chandayathaḥ samā vaso* (*Ṛgveda*: VIII.1.6).
5. *Ṛgveda: VI.52.2*

interpreted in many ways like cow, rays, food, water, speech, wealth etc.[1] Uṣas being *gavāṁ mātā* and *ṛtāvarī* can be considered as a truthful mother and all that the word *'go'* means according to its context in the *Vedas*.

Besides, the personification of Uṣas as a maiden ornamented in gay attire reveals her bosom to mortal eyes. She is young, born again and again and yet ancient. She also wastes away the life of the mortal. She shines now and shall shine in the future as in former days. She also shines forth, shortening the days of the human beings. Uṣas, on her coming awakes to life men and animals: the birds fly up from their nest and men hunt for their work.

The Dawn stands in closest relation to the Sun, who follows here as a lover. She is the wife as well as the beloved of Sūrya. In another verse, she is described as the mother of Sūrya and yet again as created by him. Her description becomes more mysterious when she is said to be the sister of Āditya Bhaga, the Kings' woman of Varuṇa and the sister, the greater sister of night, from whom, however, she is also born. She is also invoked jointly with her and both are mothers or wives of Sūrya and Agni.[2] Beyond all these, she is also said to be the daughter of the Dyaus and even once she appears as the beloved of heaven. Besides this, Uṣas is also related with other Vedic deities like Agni, Aśvinau, Moon etc.

Sarasvatī

Sarasvatī as a mother goddess is invoked in more than fifty verses of the Ṛgvedic hymns. The invocations to goddess Sarasvatī not only characterize her as the goddess of knowledge, but also as the aspects of the natural, physical, spiritual and psychological phenomena. According to Sri Aurobindo, the symbolism of the *Veda* betrays itself with

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1. *Nighaṇṭu: The Naigamakāṇḍa*
2. *Ṛgveda*: X.17.1

the greatest cleanness in the figure of the goddess Sarasvatī. In many of the other gods, the balance of the internal sense and the external figure is carefully preserved.[1] If we have to conceive the history of ancient religious thought as a progression from the physical to the spiritual, from a purely naturalistic to an increasingly ethical and psychological view of nature, we must suppose that the Vedic poets were at least already advancing from the physical and naturalistic conception of the gods to the ethical and the spiritual domains.

Sarasvatī is not only one of the seven rivers of the early Aryan world as described in so many Vedic hymns, she is also the goddess of word (*vāk*) and the divine goddess of inspiration.[2] Sri Aurobindo says that the Vedic seers used the image of water, a river or an ocean in a figurative sense and as a psychological symbol. This is amply borne out by the internal evidence of the Vedic *mantra*-s themselves. In his book *The Secret of the Veda* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondichery, 1976) he has dealt with this aspect in general and shown that there is a double significance of Sarasvatī. On one hand, she is a goddess along with Iḍā, Bhāratī and Mahī[3] and, on the other, she is one of the seven rivers (*saptasindhu* or *saptanadyaḥ*) among the Gaṅgā and Yamunā etc. In one of the Ṛgvedic verses, she is addressed as the greatest river, the most divine goddess and the most affectionate mother with the prayer to give her sacrificers self expression which refers to the significance or the fame in the society. The verse runs as follows:

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1. Sri Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1976, p.7.
2. Purani, A.B., *Studies in Vedic Interpretations*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1963.
3. *sarasvatī sādhayantī dhiyaṁ na iḷā devī bhāratī viśvatūrtiḥ / tisro devīḥ svadhayā barhiredam acchidraṁ pāntu śaraṇaṁ niṣadya //*
–(*Ṛgveda:* 2.3.8)

अम्बितमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वति।
अप्रशास्ता इव स्मसि प्रशस्तिमम्ब नस्कृधि।।

(ऋग्वेद.२.४१.१६)

Goddess Sarasvatī is full of plenitude of life- powers and rich in understanding and is invoked to attend the sacrifice. Sarasvatī purifies by getting rid of all falsehood. She is the power of Truth which we call inspiration. Truth comes to us as a light, as a voice compelling a change of thought and imposing a view discernment of ourselves all around us. The *mantra* goes thus:

पावका नः सरस्वती वाजेभिर्वाजिनीवती।
यज्ञं वष्टु धियावसुः।।

(ऋग्वेद.१.३.१०)

Besides, we also find another similar type of verse with a slight modification of words by calling her as the guardian of thoughts:

प्र णो देवी सरस्वती वाजेभिर्वाजिनीवती।
धीनामवित्र्यवतु ।।

(ऋग्वेद.६.६१.४)

It is quite interesting to note here that goddess Sarasvatī has a definite and distinct place in almost all the hymns addressed to Viśvedevāḥ. She is invoked to come over to the sacrificial altar for receiving oblations.[1] Sāyaṇa in his naturalistic and ritualistic interpretations has established Sarasvatī mostly as a sacred river who not only purifies the people by its streams but also provides abundant riches to her sacrificers in different forms. But, according to Sri Aurobindo, there emerges a spiritual interpretation from the verses addressed to Sarasvatī as she is not only a goddess or a river but also a symbolic representation of higher state of mind, thought, knowledge, truth etc. The following verse may be quoted as an example:

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1. *Ṛgveda* : III.23.4

आ नो दिवो बृहतः पर्वतादा सरस्वती यजता गन्तु यज्ञम्।
हवं देवी जुजुषाणा घृताची शग्मां नो वाचमुशती शृणोतु।।
(ऋग्वेद.५.४३.११)

(From the vast Heaven and from the mountain may Sarasvatī, worthy of sacrifice, approach our sacrifice taking frequent delight in our call, full of clarity; may she desiring our words yield happiness.)

Sāyaṇa interprets *parvatāt* as *parvataḥ prīṇanavato vāntarikṣāt meghāt vā* [1] *i.e.* the mountain or sky or the cloud and as such this is the natural interpretation of the flowing of a river. But, according to Sri Aurobindo, the symbolic significance of 'mountain' stands for two things: height or loftiness and 'solid' or 'hard matter'. And therefore Sarasvatī is invoked to come from the top of the mountain, the hill of material being, the highest height reached by matter in evolution on earth i.e. from the height of the mental being. Regarding heaven Sāyaṇa comments that there are three levels of the heaven (*santi hi dyulokasya trīṇi parvāṇi*).

Apart from this, another important point which needs to be noted here is that Sarasvatī is the goddess of whiteness. The colour white is favourite to her and so she is dressed with white garments. Thus, post-Vedic and Purāṇic concept of white complexion of Sarasvatī has its Vedic origin as she is epithetised with the word *śubhrā* (*Ṛgveda*: VII. 96.2)[2]. The *mantra* is:

उभे यत् ते महिना शुभ्रे अन्धसी अधिक्षियन्ति पूरवः।
सा नो बोध्यवित्री मरुत्सखा चोद राधो मघोनाम्।।

Pṛthivī

Pṛthivī is the mother goddess which, in spite of not being counted among the great divinities, as categorized by Keith, is variously invoked in the *Vedas*. She plays a restricted role

1. Sāyaṇa's commentary on *Ṛgveda* : V.43.11
2. *Ṛgveda* : VII.96.2

in the *Ṛgveda* as she is invoked along with Dyaus. She has one independent hymn (*Ṛgveda*: V.84) of her own, and a long and interesting hymn ascribed to her in the *Atharvaveda* (XII.1). The hymn of Pṛthivī in the *Atharvaveda* is remarkable for its accuracy of enumeration of the sights of the earth rather than for its religious fervour. She is rich in heights, bears the burden of the mountains and supports in the ground for forest trees. She is great, shining and firm and not rightly confined to her element. The *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* and the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*[1] follow the *Ṛgveda* in referring her name as Pṛthivī meaning 'extended'.[2] In the funeral hymn (*Ṛgveda*: X.18.10) she is appealed to be tender to the dead as to a child and she is called the kind mother earth. The *mantra* is:

उप सर्प मातरं भूमिमेतामुरुव्यचसं पृथिवीं सुशेवाम्।।

(ऋग्वेद.१०.१८.१०)

Some Minor Nature-Goddesses

Besides Uṣas, Sarasvatī and Pṛthivī who are depicted as the principal mother goddesses in the *Vedas*, we have also some other less significant Vedic goddesses. These goddesses do not have much invocation in the *Vedas* in comparison to other gods and goddesses. Still their contribution to the development of Vedic mother goddess cult cannot be completely ignored.

Rātri or night is treated as a goddess in the *Vedas* and she has been invoked in some Vedic verses. In the *Ṛgveda* (X.127), Rātri is invoked as the siter of dawn and the daughter of heaven.[3] But night is conceived here as the bright one which fills the valleys and the hills and drives away darkness, keeps away the wolf and the thief.[4] Sometimes Night is also invoked jointly with Uṣas as a goddess.

1. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* : VII.X.5; *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*: 1.1.3.5
2. *prathanāt pṛthivīm ity āhuḥ : Nirukta*
3. *upa te gā ivākaraṁ vṛṇīṣva duhitar divaḥ / rātri stomaṁ na jigyuṣe //* (*Ṛgveda* : X.127.8)
4. See *Ṛgveda* : X.127.6 -7

Another goddess who is clearly connected with the Nature is Pṛṣṇi, the mother of the Maruts. More interesting is the figure of Saraṇyū which occurs in a legend in the *Ṛgveda* in which it is narrated that Tvaṣṭā arranged the wedding for his daughter. On this occasion, all the worlds came together. During the wedding Saraṇyū disappeared and got married to Vivasvat. And later the two Aśvins were born from Saraṇyū.[1]

There is another group of goddesses of whom it can be said that in later *Saṁhitā*-s they are the deities of natural objects. The *Ṛgveda* leaves their character wholly uncertain and unexplained. They are 1) Rākā who appears in the *Ṛgveda*[2] as a rich and beautiful goddess; 2) Sinivālī, with broad hips, fair arms and fingers, is described as the sister of the gods and is prayed to grant children.[3] Sinivālī is also described in the *Atharvaveda*[4] as the wife of Viṣṇu.

Another deity who plays an important role in the development of the Vedic thought is Vāk or speech. In the famous Vāgāmbhṛṇīya hymn of the *Ṛgveda* she describes herself as accompanying all the gods and supporting Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Agni and the Asvins.[5] In another hymn she has been described as the queen of the gods. This goddess possesses so much of life and reality in the *Ṛgveda* that she can hardly be a mere abstraction and it is important to note here that this is perhaps the reason for which in the *Naighaṇṭukakāṇḍa*[6] she is grouped among the gods of the atmospheric region. Therefore, it is possible that thunder, which in the *Nirukta* appears as the Vāk of the middle region, may be the starting point of the goddess who naturally develops into human speech.

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1. Keith, *op.cit*, p.198.
2. *Ṛgveda* : II.32.7; V.42.12
3. *Ṛgveda* : II.32.6-8
4. *Atharvaveda* : VII.46.3
5. *Ṛgveda*: X.125.1; *cf. ahaṁ rāṣṭrī saṁgamanī vasūnāṁ cikituṣī prathamā yajñiyānām (Ṛgveda* : X.125.3)
6. *Nirukta: Naighaṇṭukakāṇḍa* : XI.27

We have another goddess[1] who owes her genesis to the actual sacrificial food is Iḍā,[2] the offering of milk and butter which occurs several times in the *Ṛgveda*. She bears the attributes *Ghṛtahasta* and *Ghṛtapāda* (butter-handed and butter- footed) which distinctly indicate her nature. Ida normally appears with Sarasvatī and Bhāratī. Agni is said to be her son, because of his birth from Iḍā's place.A mortal man Pururavas is called Aiḷa[3] because of the fact that he is an offshoot of Iḍā. She is also connected with Urvaśī, with Dadhikrāvan and the Aśvins.[4] She figures in the legend of Manu, who after the flood generated the human race through her. Iḍā is called the daughter of Manu. At the same time she is also styled as the daughter of Mitra and Varuna in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[5] and *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra*[6]. It is interesting to note here that in the *Yajurveda*, Iḍā, Sarasvatī and Bhāratī are called as the wives of Indra.[7] Thus, Iḍā is addressed variously in different Vedic verses even though no special *sūkta* is attributed to her.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be safely said that in spite of the less number of *sūkta*-s attributed to the mother goddesses in comparison to those of the gods, they play a significant role in the socio-cultural life of the ancient Vedic Aryans. But it is also quite surprising that in the post-Vedic period, almost all the above goddesses except Sarasvatī lost their importance and, as a result, they are not found in the idol-worship of the later Hindu religion. The *Vāk-sūkta* which is otherwise called *Devī-sūkta* may be regarded as the origin of most of

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1. *Ṛgveda* : VI.16.8; X.70.8 and often in the Āprī hymns.
2. *abhi na iḷā yuthasya mātā smannadībhir urvaśī vā gṛṇātu* (*Ṛgveda* : V.41.19)
3. *iti tvā devā ima āhur aiḷa yathem etad bhavasi mṛtyubandhuḥ* (*Ṛgveda* : X.95.18)
4. See *Ṛgveda* : V.41.19
5. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* : 1.8.1.8; XI.5.3.5; 1.8.1.27; 14.9.4.27
6. *Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtra* : 1.7.7
7. *Yajurveda* : 28.8

the later Purāṇic goddesses, as in the Tantric tradition this *sūkta* plays a very significant role. Therefore, the origin of most the mother goddess of later period can be traced back to the *Vedas* albeit with some modifications in their nature and features.

2

Pṛthivī as the Mother Goddess

A Vedic Vision

Prativa Manjari Rath

देवि प्रपन्नार्त्ति हरे प्रसीद प्रसीद मातर्जगतोऽखिलस्य।
प्रसीद विश्वेश्वरि पाहि विश्वं त्वमीश्वरी देवि चराचरस्य।।
आधारभूता जगतस्त्वमेका महीस्वरूपेण यतः स्थिताऽसि।
अपां स्वरूपस्थितया त्वयैतदाप्यायते कृत्स्नमलङ्घ्यवीर्ये।।

देवीमाह्यत्म्यम् :११.३-४

I. Introduction

The above verses of the *Devīmāhātmyam* eulogise the Divine Mother as the Earth, the basis of the entire creation.

In the Vedic litarature the female divinities appear in numerous forms under the names of Aditi, Asuniti, Ākūti, Iḍā, Uṣā, Kṛtyā, Gāyatrī - Sāvitrī, Gnā, Jyeṣṭhā-Alakṣmī, Dhiṣaṇā, Nadī, Nirṛti, Pṛthivī, Rātri, Vāk, Sarasvatī, Śraddhā, Sinīvālī, Kuhū, Anumati, Rākā, Sūryā so on and so forth. The concept of Earth as the mother has adapted itself to the changing condition and has evolved during the long course of time in many new forms as per the needs of the ordinary man and is still capable of change and depelopment.

The Mother Earth and the practices and belief associated with her in innumerable forms, in fact, form the basis of the *Śakti* cult. She is the Universal Mother, bountious and rich in food. She symbolises the fierce and cruel aspects of the Nature (Bhairavī) and she is the dark spirit of time destroying all things (Kālī). She represents the ideals of womanhood

and also of the beautiful devoted wife who is the basis of past and future:

सा नो भूतस्य भव्यस्य पत्न्युरुं लोकं पृथिवी नः कृणोतु।

(अथर्ववेद:१२.१)

Though during the Vedic period *Śakti* worship was not predominant, still the picture of Earth as the Universal Mother in the Vedic literature is very significant.

Therefore, an attempt is made here to analyse the fictions and facts about Pṛthivī or Bhūmi in the Vedic scenario.

II. Pṛthivī in the *Ṛgveda*

Pṛthivī is the goddess of one *sūkta* comprising only three *mantra*-s in the *Ṛgveda* (*RV* : V. 8, 1-3). Further, she is almost always coupled with Dyaus, the male divinity representing the sky. So closely associated are those two deities in the *RV* that Pṛthivī is rarely addressed alone, but almost always as a part of the dual compound as Dyāvāpṛthivī, Rodasī, Krandasī etc. They are said to kiss the centre of the world together (*RV* : I. 185-5). They sanctify each other in their complimentary relationship (*RV* : IV. 56-6). They are said to be the Universal parents who created the world (*RV* : I. 159) and the gods (*RV* : I. 185). Dyaus is often called the father and Pṛthivī as the mother. There is the implication that once upon a time these two were closely united but were separated at Varuṇa's order (*RV* : VI. 70) at a subsequent period. The Sun has been called as the son of the Heaven and Earth because he moves in the middle of both of them.

III. Dyāvā and Pṛthivī as *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*

The concept of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* of the Sāṁkhya system of Indian Philosophy might have its genesis in the the Vedic concept of Heaven and Earth. As *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* of the Sāṁkhya system cause the creation, similar are the functions of the Heaven and Earth. The *Prakṛti* of the Sāṁkhya system plays the active part whereas the *Puruṣa* gives her the

motivation to work. Similarly, the Earth does the active work, *i.e.* the creation takes place on her and the Heaven helps her in doing so by sending rains, light etc. In the *RV*, Earth as the bestower of food has become the natural mother. A prayer is made to the Earth and Heaven to pour the seed that benefits men and increases food for all (*RV : VI.* 70.2).

IV. Pṛthivī in the *Atharvaveda*

An excllent eulogy of Pṛthivī, which is otherwise famous as *bhūmisūktam*, is to be found in the twelfth *kāṇḍa* of the *Atharvaveda* (*AV*). Such long hymns are of rare occurance in the *AV*, as the hymn contains sixty-three *mantra*-s. It is unique from the point of view of its contents. It has less bearing on offering of oblations in a *yajña*. It also does not represent the bundle of sterio-typed well-known epithets and adjectives extensively used for the Vedic gods. Sāyaṇācārya has not given any commentary on any of the sixty-three *mantra*-s of the hymn, but has appended a detailed prologue to the hymn with the comment: 'पृथिवीसूक्तमेतत्। अस्मिन् पृथिव्याः प्रभूतं निसर्गवर्णनम्। But immediately he adds an account of application of different *mantra*-s of this hymm in different rituals as adopted by different *sampradāya*-s on the basis of the *Kauśika Sūtra* and *Vaitāna Sūtra*. Bloomfield expresses his opinion about the significance of the hymn in the following manner: "The hymn and its individual stanzas are employed in the ritual freely and in a considerable variety of aspect. The chief use of it is at the Āgrahāyaṇī ceremonies, the concluding ceremonies at the rites devoted to serpents".[1] The *Kauśika Sūtra* refers to the application of the *mantra*-s of this hymn in a ceremony for giving strength to buildings and getting safety from earth quake. The entire hymn is prescribed in the *Nakṣatra Kalpa* in a *mahāśānti* called Pārthivī.

The significance of the hymn lies in the fact that the seer is highly grateful and sincerely obliged to the Mother Earth

1. *Sacred Book of the East*, Vol. XLII, p. 639.

for all the benefits which he obtains from her for his livelihood, prosperity, sustenance and physical and cultural advancement. One finds a smooth touch of sublimity and sobriety and at times philosophical heights in the *mantra*-s of the hymn. The entire hymn is an excellent piece of Vedic poetry.

V. The Motherhood of Earth in the *Bhūmisūktam*

It is the bounteous nature of the Earth which has moved the seer, and therefore, a considerable portion of the hymn is devoted with the eulogy of the Earth. At the outset, the seer depicts the Earth as the guardian - protector of all who have lived and those who are yet to be[1]. At many places in the hymn, the seer exclaims that the Earth produces various agricultural items[2]. So in this regard she is the *Śākambhan.* The Earth is the perpetual source of brilliance (*tviṣi*) and strength (*bala*)[3], which she bestows on all.

She is the embodiment of motherhood and the poet has developed a strong and ingenious love and affection for the Earth as a son has for his mother. The clarion call of the seer is that Earth is his *mata* and he is the son of the soil[4]. This motherhood of Pṛthivī is extolled in several Vedic texts,such as:

पृथिवीं मातरं महीम् - तै.सं : २.४.६.८

उपहूता पृथिवी माता - शतपथब्राह्मण : १.८.१.४१

इयं (पृथिवी) वै माता - तै.सं : ३.८.९.१

नमो मात्रे पृथिव्यै - यजुर्वेद : ९.२२

तन्माता पृथिवी तत्पिता द्यौः - तै.सं : २.७.१६.३

मातेव वा इयं (पृथिवी) मनुष्यान्विभर्त्ति - शतपथब्राह्मण : ५.३.१.४

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1. *sā no bhūtasya bhavyasya patnyurulokaṁ pṛthivī naḥ kṛṇotu* / Verse - 1.
2. *yasyām annaṁ kṛṣṭayaḥ saṁbabhuvuḥ* / *Atharvaveda* : XII. 1.3; 4; 42
3. *sā no bhūmir balaṁ tviṣiṁ rāṣṭre dadhātuttame* : *Atharvaveda:* I. 8.
4. *mātā bhūmiḥ putro'haṁ pṛthivyāḥ* : *Atharvaveda* : XII. I. 2

धेनुरिव वा इयं (पृथिवी) मनुष्येभ्य: सर्वान् कामान् दुहे।

माता धेनुर्मातेव वा इयं (पृथिवी) मनुष्यान् विभर्त्ति- शतपथब्राह्मण : २.२.१.२१

VI. Pṛthivī as Annapūrṇā, Śrī and Vāk

Pṛthivī as the castle of the living beings and also as the Goddes of agriculture is transformed as the Goddess of culture. She imbibes within herself the concept of Śrī or Lakṣmī as the bestower of food and the concept of Vāk and Sarasvatī as the promoter of knowledge and culture. In fact, she is identified with Śrī[1]. She is also identified with Vāk in several Vedic texts:

वागिति पृथिवी - जैमिनीयोपनिषद् : ४.२२.११

इयं (पृथिवी) वै वाक् - शतपथब्राह्मण : ४.६.९.१६

वागेवायं (पृथिवी) लोक: - शतपथब्राह्मण : १४.४.३.११

The Atharvaṇic seer prays Earth to bestow the grace of sweet speech as ता न: प्रजा: संहुह्यतां समग्रा वाचो मधु पृथिवी धेहि मह्यम् (अथर्ववेद: - १२.१..१६)।

The various names and epithets of Pṛthivī as extolled in the *Pṛthivī- sūktam* convey the fact that Earth is the basis of Mother Goddess. Thus, she is *bhūmi* (verse 3), *viśvambharā, vasudhāni, hiraṇyavakṣā, indrarṣabhā* (verse - 6), *viśvadhānī* (verse - 7), *bhūridhārā* (verse - 9), *anamitrā* (verse - 10), *indraguptā* (verse - 11), *śivā* (verse - 17), *śyonā* (verse-17), *vimṛgvarī* (verse-29), *parjanyapatnī* (verse-42), *viśvagarbhā* (verse-43), *vasudā* (verse-44), *kīlālodhnī* (verse - 59), *payasvatī* (verse-59), *aditiḥ* (verse-61), *kāmadughā* (verse-61) etc.

The seer prays for milk from the Earth as a tender child wants it from the mother (सा ना भूमिर्विसृजतां माता पुत्राय मे पय:-अथर्ववेद - १२.१.१०). The seer wants that there must not be any trouble or trouble -monger on the surface of the Earth. He prays to the Earth that all the evil-doers on the earth should come

1. *iyaṁ pṛthivī vai śrīḥ : Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*:VIII.5; also..., *Śrīr vā iyaṁ (pṛthivī) tasmādyo'syai bhūyiṣṭhaṁ vindate sa eva śroṣṭho bhavati (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* : XI.1.6.13

under the control of the community[1]. The seer has so much attachment for the Earth that he prays to her for all the smooth activities upon the Earth and not to hurt her in any manner[2].

At the end of the hymn, the seer wishes to be the tribute-bearer to the Earth and wishes for her kind blessing in setting well in fortune and prosperity. Thus it is said:

भूमे मातर्नि धेहि मा भद्रया सुप्रतिष्ठितम्।
संविदाना दिवा कवे श्रियां मा धेहि भूत्याम्।।६३।।

VII. The Philosophical Implications of *Bhūmisūktam*

In about seven *mantra*-s, the seer has visualised the philosophical significance of the Earth. The very first *mantra* of the hymn philosophises the causes of the stability of the earth. *ṛtam*, the Cosmic Truth, *tapas* and *yajña* constitute the factors that stabilise the Earth. In the eighth *mantra* of the hymn, the seer says that the Earth in the beginning was like waters in the ocean, the wise people (*manīṣiṇaḥ*) moved on its surface with their *māyā*, the immortal heart of the Earth is concerned with the truths whose abode is in the highest firmament[3]. The seer has mentioned *ṛtam* as the stabilising factor of the earth. It has been imterpreted as the cosmic order. By the cosmic order only the Earth is stable. At another place, the seer referes to the orderly movement of the waters and the day and night upon the earth[4]. The Universe is a cosmos. It is an integrated whole which is guided and controlled by binding laws. This law or guiding principle is the *ṛtam*. In this hymn, the earth is also eulogised as possessing the *gandha* or the life essence which is the natural

1. यो नो द्वेषत् पृथिवि यः पृतन्याद्योभिदासान् मनसा यो वधेन। तं नो भूमे रन्धय पूर्वकृत्वरि।
Atharvaveda : XII.1.14.
2. उदीराणा उतासीनास्तिष्ठन्तः प्रकामन्तः। पदभ्यां दक्षिणसव्याभ्यां मा व्यथिष्महि भूम्याम्।
ibid : XII.1.38.
3. *ibid*. XII. 12.8
4. *ibid*. XII 12.9

character of Earth in the Nyāya system of Indian philosophy (*gandhavatī pṛthivī*).[1]

VIII. Pṛthivī and Aditi

Pṛthivī is called Aditi as it fulfills the desires of men and scatters men on her surface. Thus the *mantra* says:

त्वमस्यावपनी जनानामदितिः कामदुघा पप्रथाना।
यत् त ऊनं नत् त आ पूरयाति प्रजापतिः प्रथमजा ऋतस्य।
(अथर्ववेद : १२.१२.६१)

It is noteworthy that in the *Ṛgveda*, Aditi and Pṛthivī are regarded as separate deities. In many Ṛgvedic hymns they are mentioned together. In the later Brāhmaṇical literature, the identification of Aditi with the Earth becomes evident. In the Agnicayana, an offering is made to Aditi where Aditi is said to be this Earth (*Taittirīya Saṁhitā* : 5.5.1.6). So also while depositing the bricks on the fire-altar, the Earth is addresed as Aditi (*ibid*: 4.2.9.1.). In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* (4.4.12.5), Aditi is mentined as the supporter of the Earth. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Pṛthivī is repeatedly identified with Aditi[2]. Broadness and motherhood are the two characters which probably led to the identification of the Earth with Aditi.

Though Aditi in the *Ṛgveda* appears as the primal female enegy, the source from which everything is born, as identified with whatever has been and what ever shall be, emphasis is always laid on the motherhood of Aditi. Specially, as the mother of the Āditya-s, she is the mother of the gods in general and of all beings. Though in the early Vedic references Aditi is distinguished from Pṛthivī as a separate and independent deity, she is identified with Pṛthivī in the later Vedic literature.

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1. *Ṛgveda* : I 94.16; 95.11, 96.9; VI. 51.11
2. S.K. Lal, *Female Divinities in Hindu Mythology and Ritual*, p.15. fn.53.

IX. Conclusion

Thus, if one analyses the hymn of earth in the Vedic literature, one can realise what a wide range of human experience the Earth reflects and why she retains her dignity and popularity even in this century in the folk ritual called the Vasumatīsnāna or sacred ablution of Earth during the famous folk festival "Rajaparva" of Odisha[1]. Raja festival is observed in Odisha for three consecutive days during the month of Jyeṣṭha and Āṣāḍha, which symbolises the menstrual period of the mother Earth. It begins with the final day of Jyeṣṭha, continues through the first day of the Āṣāḍha and ends with the second day of that month. While the first day is known as Pahiliraja or Prathamaraja, the second one is named Rajasaṁkrānti and the third and final day as Bhūmidāha. Generally conceived as an agricultural festival, it symbolises the ancient Indian fertility cult. Just as copulation with a woman is prohibitted during her menstrual period, the mother Earth is not tilled during these three days. What is highly important in this process is the day that immediately follows the festival. On that day, generally known as Dharāsnāna, the Earth is cleaned up by besmearing cowdung as well as with the water of turmeric paste. The bathing of the Earth stands for the *śuddhasnāna* that takes place on the fourth day after menstruation, after which a female becomes fit for copulation. Incidentally, every year on this day of Vasumatīsnāna, a few drops of rain water is experienced. Thus, an integrated picture of Indian culture and ritual is reflected in the worship of the mother Earth.

Earth represents the status of a Universal Mother in the *Vedas* and this is her most significant attribute. The concept of mother Earth as the source of all plants, animals and human beings is the most ancient significant aspect of the origin of mother goddess cult. The idea of the Earth as a mother is more simple and obvious and undoubtedly more

1. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II, p. 326.

common in the world in comparison to the idea of Heaven as a father[1]. She also becomes the goddess of death because she receives within herself everything that perishes, *e.g.* the withered flowers, dead living beings etc. Thus, the *bhūmisūktam* says:

भूमे मातर्नि धेहि मा भद्रया सुप्रतिष्ठितम्।
संविदाना दिवा कवे श्रिया मा धेहि भूत्याम्।
(अथर्ववेद: : १२.१.६३)

Thus, from agriculture to culture, from existence to disappearance, from the pre-natal ceremony to funeral ceremony, Pṛthivī is the resort and sustainer of all. Therefore, she is the mother par-excellence and facts along with fiction centre round her in the entire Vedic literature.

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1. Tylor, Edward., *Primitive Culture,* Vol.II, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1871, p-326.

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3
Aditi in *Gṛhya* Rituals

Sulok Sundar Mohanty

Introduction

Mother worship has an ancient origin in India[1]. Imbibing the complete form of mother worship[2] the concept of Aditi in the *Vedas* is associated with fulfilment of earthly and transcendental ambitions.[3] In the concept, the growth of the Indian society from its pastoral stage to the stage of agricultural developments is already observed.[4] Enormity of powers[5] envisaged as the concept[6] extends almost to all aspects of nature.[7] The *Gṛhya Sūtra*-s dated approximately between 600 B.C. and 200 A.D. recommend the rituals for the domestic householders in the context of different domestic ceremonies.

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1. S.K.Lal, *Female Divinities in Hindu Mythology and Ritual*, Poona, 1980, pp. 2-11.
2. V. Raghavan, "Mother worship - Vedic Concept", Vedanta Kesari, Madras, xxxix (7), pp. 310-315.
3. M.P. Pandit, *Aditi and other Deities in the Veda*, Sri Aurovindo Study Circle, Madras, 1957, p. 185.
4. S. Madan "Evolution of Aditi and other Abstract Goddesses in the Vedic Religion, Jijñāsā, Jajpur, (1-2), 1974, pp. 62-73.
5. K. Werner, "Symbolism in the Veda and its Conceptualisation", Numen, Leiden, XXIV (3), 1977, pp. 223-240.
6. अदितिर्द्यौरदितिरन्तरिक्षमदितिर्माता स पिता स पुत्रः। विश्वे देवा अदितिः पञ्चजना अदितिर्जातमदितिर्जनित्वम् ।। (*RV* :I. 89.10, Aditi is the heaven, Aditi is mid-air, Aditi is the mother, is the father, is the son. Aditi is all gods. Aditi is men in the five classes, Aditi is all that has been born and shall be born)
7. M.I. Khan, "The Concept of Ṛgvedic Aditi", Summaries of Papers, World Sanskrit Conference, Wien, 1990.

I. Presiding Deity of the Punarvasu

In the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā* deities of different *Nakṣatra*-s find mention and it is stated here (II.13.20) that Aditi is the deity of the Punarvasu *Nakṣatra*.[1]

If a child is born under the Punarvasu *Nakṣatra*, the *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* (*ŚGS*: I.25.1-7) enjoins that oblation in the sacrificial fire should be offered after ten days from birth.

II. Deity of the Eastern Horizon

Differing from Diti (√*dā* - to bind), the deity of western horizon, famous for pushing the luminaries (*deva*-s) into darkness, Aditi represents the eastern horizon which releases the luminaries from bondage.[2]

In the general procedure of performing a domestic sacrifice, the *Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra* (*ĀPGS* : I.2.3) mentions that uttering *'adite'numantrasva'* the performer sprinkles water from the west to the east having established the fire for the sacrifice.

III. Docile by Nature

Unlike many other female deities known for their wrath, Aditi is docile and is addressed as Sumṛtika.[3]

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1. Lal, *op. cit*, p.10; V.M Apte "Is Diti in *Ṛgveda* a mere flex of Aditi?", Bharatiya Vidya, IX, K.M. Munshi D.J. Vol-I, 1949, pp. 14-22.
2. Apte, *op.cit*.
3. J. Przyluski, J, "The Great Goddess in India and Iran", Indian Historical Quarterly, X, 1934; N.M. Chaudhury, "Mother Goddess Concept in in the Vedic Literature", Indian Culture, VIII, 1942. Aditi is addressed as innocent in *AV* (VII. 6.2). In Rājasūya, two offerings are made of two pregnant cows, one reddish white and another drappled according to *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*: 15.9.12-14: अष्टापदीवत् पशुबन्धौ स्वगुणदक्षिणौ। श्येनादित्येभ्योऽदित्यै वा। वैश्वदेवीपृषतो मारुती वा. Here, the first offering is made to Aditi or Āditya and the next to Viśvedeva-s or Maruts. *cf.* K.P.Singh, *A Critical Study of Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, 1st edition, Varanasi, 1969, p. 103. Also see Lal, *op.cit*

The cow selected for immolation in reception of the guest in *madhuparka* is addressed as Aditi. If the cow is immolated, it is stated that the same is performed to honour the honourable (guest). If released, it is said that she is void of blemishes and that the cow is the mother of Rudra and daughter of the Vasu-s and is Aditi herself.[1]

IV. Mother of Noble Sons

Contact of the Aryan people with the population devoted to the Mother Goddess even before the time of the *Ṛgveda* has already been admitted.[2] She has given birth to brilliant sons like Indra, whom she inspired to kill Vṛtra[3].The *Ṛgveda* (*RV* : VII 20.5)mentions how Indra was born,[4] the Āditya-s, as their names suggest, are born from Aditi. They are adorable.[5] She is the mother of Varuṇa.[6] Mitra, Aryamā and Varuṇa are addressed together, whose cosmic powers of light, justice and warmth are the detectors of even hidden untruth. They, in fact, are the unconquered sons of Aditi, the dispensers of happiness whose power is magnified in

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1. For immolation the *mantra* is अर्हणामर्हणाय (*Vaikhānasa Gṛhya Sūtra*: XI.21) माता रुद्राणां दुहिता वसूनां xxx मा गामनागामदितिं वद्धिष्ट is the *mantra* addressed to the cow if she is released. *Cp.Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* :1.9.23.According to *ṚV* : I.24.15, when people are declared as free from sin, they remain with Aditi (as she herself is sinless).
2. Przyluski, *op.cit.*
3. य वृत्राय सिनमित्रामरिष्यत् प्र तं जनित्री विदुषे उवाच (*RV* : II. 30.2) The Mother of Infinity (Aditi) discloses the resplendant soul as well as the name of the evil one who offers oblation to the dark forces.
4. The Supreme lord, the mighty begets the lower part in the body, He being the father. (On the other hand, Aditi being the mother) brings him forth (and Indra is born to become a valiant warrior, the Conquerer, the leader, the seeker of truth and remarkably bolder. (चित् नारी नर्यं ससूव, Sāyaṇa : नर्यं नरहितं तमु तम् एव इन्द्रं नरी चिददिति……)
5. *ṚV* : II 28. त आदित्यास: आदिते: पुत्रा: "O adorable sons of (Mother Infinity) Aditi..........
6. *ṚV* : IV.42.4 ऋतेन पुत्रो अदितेर्ऋतावोत।

exposition of truth (*ṚV* : VII. 60.5).[1] According to the *ṚV* (VII. 42.2), Bhaga is the powerful, gracious, bounty, the sustainer of the Universe to whom a common man, even the opulent, the sons of Aditi, praise saying 'Give me (wealth) for enjoyment' and she is praised at the time of dawn.[2]

In the marriage ceremony when the bride groom presents a quill of porcupine and a string of thrice twisted threads in the right hand of the bride before the *pāṇigrahaṇa*, *ŚGS* (I.12.6) prescribes the *mantra* "As this (presentation of the quill etc.) has protected Śacī, the beloved one and Aditi, the mother of noble sons and Apala, never a widow, may it thus protect you" and then utters the name of his bride.[3]

V. Mistress of the Household

Aditi is identified as the 'Nature', who is the source of all bliss as a mother becomes the mistress of her household.[4] She is the wife of the cosmic order.

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1. इमे चेतारो अनृतस्य भूरेर्मित्रो अर्यमा हि सन्ति। इम ऋतस्य वावृधुर्दुरोणे शग्मास: पुत्रा अदितेरदब्धा। (ऋग्वेद: ७.६०.५) Here Sāyaṇa Comments: इमे मित्रोऽर्यमा वरुणश्च त्रयोऽनृतस्य पापस्य भूरे: प्रभूतस्य चेतारो हन्तार: सन्ति। भवन्ति हि। इमे मित्रादय ऋतस्य यज्ञस्य दुरोणे गृहे ववृधु:। वर्धते हविषा सुत्या च। कीदृशास्ते। शग्मास: सुखकर अदिते पुत्रा अदब्धा अहिंसिता:। According to A.C. Clayton (*The Rig Veda and Vedic Religion*, Reprint, Varanasi, 1980, p. 88), "Aditi is asked for blessing of children,cattle and for protection, but her two notable characteristics are that: (i) she is the mother of the Āditya-s and (ii) that like Varuṇa, the chief of her sons, she can heal suffering and forgive sin".
2. प्रातर्जितं भगमुग्रं हुवेम वयं पुत्रमदितेार्यो विधर्त्ता। आध्राश्चिद्यं मन्यमान स्तुरश्चिद्राजा चिद्यं भगं भक्षीत्याह।। Sāyaṇa : यो भगो विधर्त्रा विश्वस्य जगतो धारको जितं जलशीलम् उग्रं उद्गूर्णम् अदिते: पुत्रं भगं देवं प्रात: काल एव वयं हुवेम। आह्वयाम:। आध्राश्चिद् दरिद्रोऽपि स्तोता यं भगं देवं मन्यमान: स्तुवन् भगं भजनीयं धनं भक्षि भज विभज मह्यं देहीति आह ब्रवीति। तुरश्चित् तुरतिर्गतिकर्मा। प्राप्तधनोऽपि राजा चित्समर्थोऽपि जनो यं भगं देवं भजनीयं धनं मह्यं भक्षि देहीत्याह। तं भगं प्रात: प्रातरेव वयं हुवेमेति संबन्ध:।
3. यथेयं शचीं वावातां सुपुत्रां च पथादितिम्। अविधवां चापालामेव त्वामिह रक्षतादिमम् इति दक्षिणे पाणौ विवृतं शललीं ददाति।
4. *ṚV* : IV. 55.3 "I implore Nature's bounties such as Mother Infinity and the ocean and the divine source of bliss for friendship. I praise you both night and morning. You fulfil our wishes. Also see, H.W. Bailey, Wijasekara Felicitation Volume, 1970, pp. 75-76. Aditi is invoked in the *ṚV* (VIII. 62.12) for progeny.

In *sīmantonnayana* which is performed only once for the wife after his first pregnancy, the husband parts the hair of the wife upwards. The *Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra* (*GGS*:II.7.6)[1] mentions[2] that while parting her hair by means of a splint of Vīratara wood, he recites (*Mantra Brāḥmaṇa* : I. 5.2) the *mantra* where it is expressed that as Aditi, the ideal wife of Prajāpati (Kāśyapa) was able to enjoy the great fortune and had all her sons alive by (the merit of performance of) this (rite of parting of her hair by her husband), I perform the same for you.[3] In the *Vaiśvadeva* sacrifice, due as a daily rite by the householder, oblation is offered to Aditi.[4] In the establishment of *gṛhya* fire by the householder for performance of any sacrifice, prayer is offered to Aditi.[5]

VI. Aditi for Protection

Aditi[6] protects men particularly children as their mother[7]. She is the prominent mother goddess in the *Atharvaveda*.[8] *ṚV* (VIII. 47.9) offers prayer to Aditi for protection.

For protection from injury at the time of first hair cutting when the child runs into risk due to the use of the sharp razor, the *mantra* common in almost all the *Gṛhya Sūtra*-s, save their variants, offer prayer to Aditi.[9] The modified

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1. *AV* : VII. 6.2: *ṛtasya patnī*
2. अथ वीरतरेण येनादितेरितयार्च्या।
3. येनादिते: सोमानं नयति। प्रजापतेर्महते सौभाग्याय। तेनाहमस्मै सीमानं नयामि प्रजामस्मै जरदष्टिङ् कृणोमि।।
4. According to *ŚGS* (II. 14.1-14), oblations are due to Aditi, Anumati and Agni Sviṣṭakṛt.
5. *ĀPGS* (I.2.3): अग्निं परिषिञ्चति अदितेऽनुमन्यस्व इति दक्षिणत: प्राचीनम् अनुमतेऽनुमन्यस्व इति पश्चादुदीचानम्......
6. Puspendra Kumar, "Female Deities in Atharvaveda", *Historical and Critical Studies in the Atharvaveda*, Delhi, 1981, pp. 155-156.
7. *AV* : II. 28.5: मातेवास्मा अदित शर्मयच्छ।
8. *AV* : VI. 4.1: पुत्रभ्रातृभिरदितिन: पातु।; See Lal, *op.cit*. pp. 6-8.
9. *ĀPGS* : 1.17.7: अदिति: केशान् वपतु; *MGS* : 1.21.3:, *Āpastamba Mantrapāṭha*: II. 1.1;*PGS* :II. 1.6-7: अदिते केशान् वप।

mantra in *godāna* also includes prayer to Aditi.[1] *ŚGS* (I. 27.7) offers prayer to Aditi in *annaprāsana*.

Unusual happenings like burning of an idol or warming or cracking of it or a cow sulking milk from another etc. are mentioned in the *MGS* (II.15.6) and to avert the misfortune indicated by these happenings, among others, prayer is offered to Aditi.[2] While crossing a river by a boat[3] or ascending a coach[4] or bed during the period from Śrāvaṇa to Pratyavarohaṇa when snake bite is apprehended[5] Aditi is offered prayer reciting the *mantra* where Aditi is addressed as good faced (*AV* : VII. 6.3)[6].

VII. Aditi for Prosperity

Prayer to Aditi or Āditya-s for prosperity[7] and also in the context of Rājasūya have already been mentioned.[8] According to the *Kauṣitakī Brāhmaṇa* (*K.Br* : XXiii), the *mantra* '*sutrāmāṇaṁ pṛthivī*'[9] etc. is recited when one enters into a newly constructed house.[10]

VIII. Aditi for Knowledge

Mother of brilliant sons[11], wife of *ṛta*[12] are the epithets of Aditi as already mentioned. For a Brahmin sacrificer to offer oblation in the sacrifice, the same is directed to Aditi, to Indra

1. *ĀPGS* : 1.18.3
2. यद्यर्चा दहेद्वा नश्येद्वा प्रतपेद्वा xxx गौर्वा गां धयेत् xxx एताभिर्जुहुयात्।
3. *ŚGS* : 1.15.7; *PGS* : III. 15. 11; *MGS* : 1.13.16
4. *ŚGS* : IV. 15.22: सुत्रामाणामिति शय्यामारोहेत्।
5. Oldenberg, *Sacred Book of the East*, Vol. XXIX, p. 129, note 22.
6. सुत्रामाणं पृथिवीं द्यामनेहसं सुशर्माणमदितिं सुप्रणीतिं देवीं नावं स्वरित्रामनागसो अस्रवन्ती मा रुहेमा स्वस्तये।
7. See notes18, 20 and 23, for fulfilment of desires *ṚV* (VIII. 18.6), *AV* (VII. 7.2), *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* (1.7.7.1, II. 8.1.6).
8. See page 24, note 3 and Singh, *loc.cit*.
9. See note 6 above.
10. यजूंषि यज्ञ इति नवशालायां सर्पिर्मधु जुहोति।
11. See p. 24, notes 3-6; p. 25, notes 1-2
12. See p. 26, note 2.

by a Kṣatriya and to Viśvedeva-s by a Vaiśya according to *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* (*ŚŚS*: 21.4)[1].

Hiraṇyakeśī Gṛhya Sūtra (*HGS* : I. 4.6) mentions that when the upper garment is given to the student at the time of *upanayana* the *mantra* 'May Aditi keep the upper garment tightly (on your body) so as to enable you to study the *Veda*, develop insight, have faith (in what you have studied), sustain holiness and bristle with holy lustre' is recited.[2]

Resume

i. The *Gṛhya Sūtra*-s retain the attributes of Aditi reflected in the early Vedic literature.

ii. Prayers to Aditi in the daily rites by the householder and at the time of performance of sacrifice in domestic rituals indicate the popularity of the deity during the age of the *Gṛhya Sūtra*-s.

iii. The deity is associated with the process of learming and preservation of the Vedic tradition. Aditi, like Sarasvatī, is believed to inculcate the capacity of learning and increase the protential in the Vedic students in *upanayana* ceremony. In this context, she being designated as Viṣṇupatni (see. note 43) assumes significance. Serious efforts of our *Sūtrakāra*-s to preserve and proliferate the ever expanding Vedic tradition and vision seem to contribute to this new aspect of development in the concept of Aditi, the divine Mother. Perhaps this is the contribution of the *sūtra*-age to the concept of Aditi.

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1. R.N. Sharma, *Culture and Civilization as revealed in the Śrauta Sūtras*, 1st edition, Delhi, 1977, pp.50, 54.
2. अदिति: ते कक्षां वध्नातु वेदस्यानुवक्तव्यै मेधायै श्रद्धयानूक्तस्यानिराकरणाय ब्रह्मणे ब्रह्मवर्चसाय। Like Sarasvatī and Lakṣmī, she is addressed as Viṣṇupatnī in *Baudhāyana Śrauta Śūtra*, XXIV.11; See Sharma, *op.cit*.

4

Sarasvatī as A Mother Goddess

A Purāṇic Overview

Binodini Panda

Preliminary

Goddess Sarasvatī took a long way from the form of the Ṛgvedic river to be a part of the mother goddess trinity. It is the *Purāṇa-s* that flood much light on the gradual development of this unique goddess. As such, many gods and goddesses came into concrete corporeal forms in the Purāṇic age. But Sarasvatī conspicuously stands out because of her pre-Purāṇic antiquity and intricate existence in Indian philosophy. Here we aim at reflecting upon her form and spirit in the Purāṇic literature only.

In the *Vedas*, Sarasvatī is described as the purifier, bestower of rice and giver of wealth[1]. She illuminates the entire range of the heaven and earth by her light[2]. Again she is described as a friend of the Marut-s and Indra [3], but chiefly she is described as a river and the best of the rivers (*Nadītamā* : *Ṛgveda*-II.41.16*)*. Gradually, speech is attributed to her and she is knokwn as the goddess of speech.

Like other mother goddesses, Sarasvatī is also portrayed as an affectionate mother, though only in a few *mantra*-s in the *Ṛgveda*,motherhood has been ascribed to her conceiving her as a source of fertility[4], as a milch-cow and even as a

1. *Ṛgveda* :I.3.10-11
2. *Ibid* : VI.61.11-12
3. *Ibid* : V.43.11
4. *Ibid* : VII.36.6

goddess. The fundamental function of a mother is to nourish and look after her child. As a river Sarasvatī does well to the worshippers as if they are her own progeny living alongside her banks. As a goddess she is more capable of granting her devotees precious presents and is, therefore, figuratively conceived as a milch-cow[1] bringing richness and health-some food[2]. Sarasvatī is regarded as *'Ambitamā'*, *'Sindhumātā'*, and *'Mātā'*. One of the Ṛgvedic *mantra-s* describes her as *'Ambitamā'* meaning 'the best of mothers' addressing her in the vocative case as *'Ambitame'*[3]. It also suggests that several mother goddesses had emerged in the Ṛgvedic period. The word *'Sindhumātā'*[4] is explained by Sāyaṇa as *"apāṁ mātṛbhutā"* and by Mādhava as *'sindhunāṁ mātā'*. More properly, *'Sindhumātā'* may be explained as *'Sindhunāṁ Jalānāṁ vā mātā'* the mother of rivers or waters. One of the Ṛgvedic *mantra-s*[5] portrays the dual character of Sarasvatī: as a river and as a goddess (along with Sarayu and Sindhu). Since waters protect and nourish everybody as a mother, they are called. *"āpaḥ mātaraḥ"*. In the *Ṛgveda*[6], Sarasvatī is also described as *'virapatnī'* and it is explained by Wilson as 'the bride of the hero, Prajāpati or Brahmā.' Sāyaṇa explains it as *'viraḥ prajāpatiḥ patir yasyas tādṛśī yad vā vīrāṇāṁ pālayitrī."*

In the post Vedic literature, especially in the Purāṇic literature we come across the trinity of Gods,namely, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa as well as the trinity of Goddesses,namely, Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī and Durgā. There are numereous accounts in different *Purāṇa*-s regarding the origin of Sarasvatī. While some of the accounts bear similarities with others as regards the subject matter, some are of a distinctive nature. Some of the most significant views of the *Purāṇa*-s concerning Sarasvatī as a mother goddess are as follows.

1. *Yajurveda* : XX.75
2. *Ṛgveda* : I.3.10, VI.61.4
3. *Ibid* : II.41.16
4. *Ibid* : VII.36.6
5. *Ibid* : X.64.9
6. *Ibid* : VI.49.7

The marriage of Sarasvatī and Brahmā has been mentioned several times in some of the *Purāṇa*-s and Brahmā is closely related to her either as her husband or as her father. According to the *Matsya Purāṇa*, Sarasvatī has been produced by Brahmā, the great creator who is thought to have created all the *Vedas* and *Śāstra*-s from his mouth.[1] After that he produced his ten mind-born sons[2]. By this creation of his own Brahmā was not satisfied and he began to ponder over the question as to who could carry on the burden of creation. He therefore began to invoke Sāvitrī and after some time Sāvitrī was produced from his body. This form is also known under various names such as Śatarūpā, Sarasvatī, Gāyatrī, Sāvitrī and Brahmmāṇī.[3]

Again it is stated at another place that Sarasvatī was born out of the half portion of Brahamā's body as his daughter. But when he looked at her, he was passionate of her unrivaled beauty and praised her enchanting prettiness. Ultimately, Brahmā married her who was of hundred beauties (*śatarūpā*). He enjoyed the company of Sarasvatī for hundred years living inside the lotus[4]. When Brahmā enjoyed the company of Sarasvatī, Manu was born. Thus, Manu was the son of Sarasvatī (*śatarūpā*) and Brahmā. This Manu is called Svāyambhuva Manu. Besides him, there are fourteen other Manu-s all of whom are his descedants[5]. This creation owes its origin to the divine union between Brahmā and Sarasvatī.

The *Brahmavaivartta Purāṇa* records another account pertaining to the origin of Sarasvatī. It maintains that the *'mūlaprakṛti'* is the energy (*śakti*) of the Ātman. But how things evolved from this *'mūlaprakṛti'* is to be seen. In this *Purāṇa* it is mentioned that at the primeval stage Ātman remained

1. *Matsya Purāṇa* : III.2-4
2. *Ibid* : III.5-8
3. *Ibid* : III.30-32
4. *Ibid* : III.33-43
5. *Ibid* : III.44-47

motionless, but when it desired for creation, he took two forms: male and female. This female form was called *Prakṛti*. This *Prakṛti* also, according to the wishes of Śrīkṛṣṇa, took the five-fold form under the name of Durgā, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī. In this way, Sarasvatī has been reckoned as one of the five *Prakṛti*-s constituting the ultimate causes of the Universe.[1] Here Śrīkṛṣṇa has been identified with the '*Paramātman*' or the Brahman.

According to the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, Sarasvatī is said to have been produced from Brahmā as Viśvarūpa. This *Purāṇa* maintains that Brahmā had no offspring. He, therefore meditated and in the course of his meditation, Sarasvatī was born.[2]

brahmaṇaḥ putrakāmasya dhyāyataḥ parameṣṭhinaḥ /
prādurbhutā mahānandā viśvarūpā sarasvatī //

Here she is supposed to be the mind- born daughter of Brahmā and, at the same time, taken to be the *Prakṛti*.It has been said in the *Padma Purāṇa* that Śatarūpā (Sarasvatī) has produced the seers, Prajāpati-s Manu-s and others.[3]

According to the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, there is a conjugal procreation through the process of union between the male and female forms. The origin of this procreation is Mahālakṣmī. For this purpose, Mahālakṣmī at first produced three eggs. Brahmā was produced along with Śrī Sarasvatī from one of the eggs; from the second egg he was produced along with Śiva and Viṣṇu and from the third, he was created along with Ambikā.[4] The concept of three eggs symbolizes the stage of Hiraṇyagarbha Prajāpati. This Hiraṇyagarbha Prajāpati also seems to have been born from the Supreme power. Paramātman along with the combined notion of the latter's female power is called Mahālakṣmī. This Mahālakṣmī as the

1. *Brahmavaivartta Purāṇa* : II.1.1
2. *Vāyu Purāṇa* : XXIII.37.38
3. *Padma Purāṇa* : V.16.10-12
4. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* : IV.405ff

Supreme Goddess stands parallel to the *Paramātman*. The Supreme power is the architect of the triad of gods, namely, Brahmā Viṣṇu and Maheśa and the triad of goddesses, namely, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Ambikā (Durgā). All these six gods and goddesses are responsible for the creation, nourishment and protection of the Universe. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* it is described that Sarasvatī has created all the *tanmātrā-s*, which are essential for the creation of the universe.[1]

The *Agni Purāṇa*[2] also describes Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī as the wife of Brahmā, the creator of the Universe. While describing the image of Brahmā, it lays down that the images of Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī should be respectively at the left and right side of Brahmā's image (*ājyasthāli sarasvatī sāvitrī vāmadakṣiṇe*).

The *Vāmana Purāṇa* describes that the whole Universe and the *Vedas* are evolved from Sarasvatī.[3] She is the embodiment of all fundamental atoms capable of creating the Universe.[4]

According to the Sāṁkhya system, *'Prakṛti'* is the fundamental source of the Universe. In the *Purāṇa*-s too, the presence of similar type of philosophy is noticed in an explicit manner. For instance, Durgā, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī are denoted by the single name *'Prakṛti'*. All of them are capable of creation. They are therefore called the five forms of *'Prakṛti'*.[5] Elsewhere it is also described that when the mind-born sons of Brahmā took no interest in the activities of the world, He created Sarasvatī to bear the burden of the Universe. So in the form of *'Śakti'* or energy of the Supreme Being, Sarasvatī created the whole world which has its base in her and shows her association with the

1. H.H.Wilson, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa : A System of Hindu Mythology*, pp.LXIV-LXV.
2. *Agni Purāṇa* : XI.9.15
3. *Vāmana Purāṇa* : XXXII.6
4. *Ibid* : XXXII.10-12
5. *Brahmavaivartta Purāṇa* : II 1.1.

Supreme Being.[1] In the *Purāṇa-s* Sarasvatī has been closely related to Brahmā, the creator. This has portrayed an image of the goddess as a creator-goddess.

Conclusion

Originally a terrestrial river, Sarasvatī was later on ascribed with the divine character on account of the sanctity of its water.It was subsequently conceived as *vāk* (speech) and then as the goddess of speech (*vāgdevī*). This inspired the Purāṇic vision and mind to conceive her as the goddess of speech, learning and eloquence and one among the trinity of Mother Goddesses.

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1. *Agni Purāṇa*, Anandashrama Sanskrit Series, Poona, 1957.
2. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, Sri Venkatesvara Steam Press, Bombay,
3. *Brahmavaivartta Purāṇa*, Anandashrama Sanskrit Series, Poona, 1935.
4. *Padma Purāṇa*, Anandashrama Sanskrit Series, Poona, 1907.
5. *Matsya Purāṇa*, Anandashrama Sanskrit Series, Poona, 1907.

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1. *Matsya Purāṇa* : III 30-32

5
Śākambharī
The Goddess of Fertility

Kamal Lochan Kar

Every religion has evolved through the ages in multifaced aspects and multidimensional proportions. It has its own philosophy, ritualistic pattern, cults, customs, mode of worship associated with plexuses and symbols. In order to understand Indian culture and civilization one cannot neglect these aspects which have become part and parcel of Indian culture.[1] No doubt, in every religion one finds some gods and goddesses. But it is worthy to be mentioned here that the goddesses occupy a more prominent place than the gods. In India behind the apparently polytheistic conceptions the Vedic seer could realize the trace of a deeply engrained monotheism. And this wonderful current of applied monotheism has been flowing on in the hearts of every Hindu till now. The concept of one supreme God who is in fact above all Gods has been an abiding fact in the Hindu religious consciousness.

Origin of the Cult of the Mother Goddess

In the Paleolithic age the cult of the Mother Earth was in vogue. When the earth was filled with bumper crop, the primitive mind conceived her as a woman. Now the question arises, 'why has been the earth identified with a woman?' What is after all the reason behind it? The reply is that the

1. H.C. Das, "Evolution of Śākta-Tantric Cult in Orissa", Orissa Review, Oct., 1978, p.17.

work of a woman and that of the earth carries much affinity. As a woman conceives and bears a child, the earth also bears fruits. Secondly, women were engaged in agricultural work. So in India Śakti cult has been developed by women who were primarily food-gatherers.

Not only is it a case with India, one can also find the same in ancient Greece.[1] The history of ancient India, Baluchistan, Iran, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Egypt etc. bears testimony to the worship of the Mother Goddess in prehistoric times.[2] Cybele in Phygia, Isis in Egypt are such very ancient deities. In Asia Minor an ancient mother goddess was worshipped.She is called 'Ma'. This name 'Ma' may be compared with the Sumerian 'Mama' or 'Mamitu'.[3] According to Sir John Marshall[4], the cult of Mother Goddess has its origin in Anatholia, in Phygia and from there it spread all over Northern Asia.

Some scholars[5] try to prove that in the beginning there was the patriarchal family system. From patriarchal society there was the development of matriarchal society. Plato and Aristotle believed that in the whole world the structure of the society was patriarchal. Rousseau, Herder and Comte give the same opinion. But this view is highly opposed by others. As a matter of fact, in the beginning the position of the mother was more than that of the father. It goes without saying that just after the birth the child is dependant on its mother. So naturally matriarchy is prior to patriarchy. Therefore, even in the most primitive societies the mother

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1. L.R.Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, Edinburgh, 1896-1909, Vol.V p.180; also J.E.Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Cambridge, 1908, pp.131-146.
2. Pushpendra Kumar, *Śakti Cult in Ancient India* (with Special Reference to the Purāṇic Literature), Varanasi, 1974, p.3.
3. N.N.Bhattacharya, *The Indian Mother Goddess*, Calcutta, 1971, p.13.
4. Sir John Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and Harappa Civilization*, Vol.I, p.50.
5. M.C.P Srivastava, *Mother Goddess in Indian Art, Archaeology and Literature*, Delhi, 1979, p.2.

held a prominent position in the family.[1] To quote Starbuck, "Clan life in which the mother is the head of the group is likely to lift the Mother Goddess into a supreme position."[2] So it is quite evident that in a matriarchal family, the mother being the most important member and head of the family, the worship of the mother Goddess is likely to have its root.

ŚāKambharī in Indus Valley Culture

Payne[3] states that in 3rd millennium B.C. in pre-Aryan India Mother Goddess had already occupied a prominent place. The archaeological excavations at Harappa, Mohenjo-daro and other localities under the supervision of Sir John Marshall have pushed back Indian history to 3rd millennium B.C., if not to a still more remote period. And India can claim the honour of being a pioneer of civilization along with Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, Egypt and Assyria.[4] The skeletons unearthed at Mohenjo-daro belong to the chalcolithic period. It may be called a proto-history period. The chronological tests reveal the presence of the following four racial types at Moheno-daro:

i. Proto-Australoid

ii. Mediterranean

iii. Mongoloid

iv. Alpinoid

Since no structure of a temple can be found from Mohenjo-daro or Harappa region, historians find no other way but to depend on a number of seals, clay, sealings, copper tablets, a variety of small figurines of terracotta, faience and above all some metal and a few stone images to

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1. E.O.James, *The Cult of the Mother Goddess*, London, 1959, p.229.
2. Starbuck, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol.V, p. 828.
3. E.A.Payne, *The Śāktas: An Introduction and Comparative Study*, Delhi, 2003, p.115.
4. A.D.Pusalker, "The Indus Valley civilization", *The Vedic Age*, Bombay, 1965, p.172.

form an idea about the religion of the people of the Indus valley. Many figurines recovered from this area represent the Great Mother Goddess or Nature Goddess whose worship under various names and forms is still in vogue in India.

The presence of a fertility cult among these people is represented by figurines of pregnant women and women with children. These may be the effigies of the Mother Goddess. One can mark that most of the male figurines are entirely nude ones.[1]

A number of figurines of terracotta, faience etc. portray a standing and semi-nude figure wearing a girdle or band round her loins, with elaborate head-dress and collar, occasionally with ornamental cheek cones and necklaces. Sometimes the ear-ornaments are like caps suspended on either side of the head. A pottery figurine of a nude female has been recovered from the Indus Valley site. It wears a short skirt, held round the loins by a girdle. It is significant to note that no figurines have been reported from the pre-Harappan levels.[2] Most probably, holds Mackay[3], the deity represents a Mother Goddess whose name has been lost in the oblivion of the past. Figurines of this type were there almost in all the houses in the Indus Valley in a recess or in a bracket in the wall. So, the cult of the Mother Goddess is non-Aryan in origin.[4]

In another case a totally nude female figure has been excavated from Harappa. The female is turned upside down with outspread legs and a plant is issuing from her womb.[5]

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1. M.S.Vats, "India Valley civilization", *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Calcutta Vol.I, 1970. p.122.
2. Malati J.Shende, "The Language of the Harappans: An Unconsidered Possibility", ABORI, Vol.LXXV, Poona 1994, p. 152.
3. E.Mackay, *Early Indus Civilization*, 2nd edition,revised and enlarged by Derothy Mackay,London,p.54
4. N. Venkataramanayya, *Rudra-Śiva*, University of Madras, 1941, p.58.
5. Sir John Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, London, Vol.I, 1931, p.52, Pl.xii.

The reverse side has a man with a sickle-shaped knife in hand and a woman seated on the ground with hands raised. Obviously, it stands for a human sacrifice to the Earth Goddess. From this N.N. Bhattacharya[1] concludes that the later Purāṇic concept of Śākambharī has originated from the Harappan culture. The idol clearly indicates that like today in ancient days also Mother Earth was worshipped for giving us crops, fruits and roots.

According to Murray[2], the figurines of the Indus Valley representing a lady may be categorized under three heads:

i. The Divine Woman – Ishtar type

ii. The Divine Mother – Isis type

iii. The Personified Yoni – Baubo type

Śākambharī belongs to third cateogory.

A number of deities of the later Vedic and Purāṇic period have their origin in the Indus culture[3]. Sir John Marshall[4] has rightly opinied that the Devi in the Indus Valley Civilization turned into the Female Principle in later days.

Thus, Śākambharī, in her original form, has been brought from the Indus culture. Later, due to the amalgamation of the Aryan and the Non-Aryan culture, this deity entered into the Hindu pantheon.

Importance of the Sex Symbol

The anionic phallic symbols have been given importance in the Indus culture.[5] Sir John Marshall has also stressed on this phallic aspect. It can be emphatically stated that from time immemorial man has admired the accentuated feminine characteristic features such as long and thick locks of black

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1. N.N.Bhattacharya, *op.cit*, p.22.
2. M.A.Murray, "Female Fertlity Figurines", Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol.LXIV, 1934.
3. H.C.Das, *op.cit*, p.17
4. Sir John Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, *op.cit*, p.57.
5. M.S Vats, *op.cit*, pp. 123-124.

hair with low fore-head side curls on the temples, firm resilient globular breasts, broad fleshy buttocks, fatty-cushioned vulva with thick bushy growth of black hair.[1]

Not only in India but also in some foreign countries has this sex symbol been found to have been given importance. At Malta some figurines have been discovered with marked sexual features.[2] Wilson and Mackenzie are of the opinion that the ancient people of Mesopotamia and Aegia were acquainted with some of the geometrical figures resembling with the Tantric diagrams of the shape of the female genitalia. These Mesopotamian and Aegean people connected their diagrams with the goddesses like Artemis, Hera, Demeter, Astarte and Chaldean Nana.[3]

Among the aniconic objects of worship the *liṅga-s* and *yoni-s* are there. The *yoni-s* have been pierced with a cylindrical hole in the centre and they were either round or had a wavy outline. Since from very early times man has represented female figure by giving considerable emphasis on her generative organ, the deity found in the Indus Valley area may represent the Mother Goddess standing for procreation and fertility.[4] Mackay speaks of the discovery of a symbol of *yoni* from Harappa also.[5]

In the Indus Valley civilization the ring stones have been identified as *yoni*, the female generative organ.[6] In the figures of the Mother Goddess two aspects have been stressed:

(i) The Vulva

(ii) Voluptous breasts

There is absolutely no disagreement that there was

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1. Candra Chakravarti, *Sex Life in Ancient India*, Calcutta 1963, p.87.
2. M.A. Murray, *Excavations at Malta*, part-III, London, 1929, pp.11-19.
3. N.N.Bhattacharya, *History of the Śākta Religion*, New Delhi, 1974, p.98.
4. M.K.Dhavalikar, "Śākambharī- the Headless Goddess", ABORI, Vol.LXVIII, Poona, 1987, pp.286-287.
5. E.Mackay, *op.cit*, pp.66-68.
6. M.C.P Srivastava, *op.cit*, p.28

phallic worship in India among the Indus Valley people, referred to contemptuously in the *Vedas* as Śiśnadevaḥ 'who have the phallus as their god'.[1]

The human sense organs are made of such elements that get stimulated at the sight of beauty (*rūpa*), by the taste of sweet and delicious dishes (*rasa*), by the smell of nice perfumes (*gandha*), by listening to a melodious voice (*śabda*) and by touching some tender object (*sparśa*). These are the visual sensation, auditory sensation, olfactory sensation, tactual sensation etc. But it is worthy to be noted that the very sight of a sexy youthful beauty stimulates all the endocrinological glands of a human being.[2]

Śakti-Cult and the Occult Formulae

Tantra in a specific sense refers to the doctrinal thories of Śakti worship. Some scholars are of the opinion that Śakti cult has its root in magic, whether black or white. Many esoteric practices are exotic by nature. However, the view of Lalye[3] on the point that the Tantra school originated somewhere in the Gupta period cannot be accepted,because the origin of Tantra can be traced back to the Chalcolithic age of the Indus Valley civilization. No doubt, the Tantric worship developed as a cult in the later period, later than the time of the Vedic scriptures. Nevertheless, all the elements of Tantra cannot be put to the post-Vedic period. As a matter of fact, some of the elements of Tantra were in vogue even in the Vedic age, or even earlier than that. The technical terms of Tantra such as *svāhā, svadhā, vaṣaṭ, vāṭ* etc. can be met with in the *Yajurveda* [4]. These terms actually bear some significant meaning in the Tantric texts. But at present it is not possible to trace the meaning of these terms. They

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1. Alex Wayman, "O, that Liṅga!" ABORI, Vol.LXVIII, Poona, 1987, pp.28-29.
2. Chandra Chakravarti, *op.cit*, p.100.
3. P.G.Lalye, *Studies in Devī Bhāgavata*, Bombay, 1973, p.109.
4. M.Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, Vol.I, Delhi, 1981, p.185 ff.

are simple 'utterances' for any modern man without any meaning. Tantra also makes use of some inarticulated sounds such as *ām*, *hṛm*, *phaṭ*, *āḥ* etc. The *Atharvaveda* contains more such Tantric elements along with magic.

It can be emphatically stated that Buddhism contributed a lot for the development of the Śakti-cult. The first written Tantras of Buddhist origin are the *Prajṁāpāramitā*, *Gūhya-Samāja* and the *Mañjuśrīmūlatantra*. The Hindu ten Mahavidyā-s such as Kālī, Karālī, Mahākālī, Durgā, Aparājitā, Katyāyanī, Mahiṣamardinī, Bhairavī, Tārā and Soḍaśī may be compared with the Buddhist Nīlasarasvatī, Tārā, Aparajitā, Marīci, Parṇaśavarī, Prajṁāpāramitā etc.

In the Tantra *maithuna* or coitus is one of the *paṁcamakāras*. This sexual aspect has a link with fertility magic. Thus, Śākambharī may have some internal connection with Tantra.

Characteristic Features of Śākambharī

Śākambharī and Chinnamastā are not the two forms of the same deity. They are in fact two different deities.The difference between the two is that Goddess Chinnamasta holds her own severed head which drinks her own blood, as do two female attendants while the Goddess trods the copulating couple.[1] But Śākambharī has no head.

Agrawala[2] interprets Śākambharī as the supporter of the Śaka-s. He speaks of the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa rule in India. He further refers to the emperors like Kaniṣka, Haviṣka etc. But this view cannot be accepted for two reasons:

(i) The origin of this deity can be traced back to the Indus Valley civilization.

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1. Janardan Mishra, *Bhāratīya Pratīka Vidyā*, Patna, 1959, Plates 67, 73 & 74.
2. V.S.Agrawala, *Devī Māhātmyam, The Glorification of the Great Goddess*, Varanasi, 1963, Ch.II, verses 43-45, pp.138-141.

(ii) *śākaṁ bharati vibharti iti vā Śākambharī* -Literally one who supports vegetation

Dhavalika[1] has pointed out that Śākambharī is confined to Deccan only, particularly Maharashtra, Andhra and Karnataka. Since the worship of this deity is fully confined to South India, it can be stated that this deity originating from the Indus Valley civilization is still alive among the inhabitants of South India who belong to the Dravidian group and who are linked directly with the people of Indus Valley. Even now in South India tutelary deities such as Mātā, Ambā, Ammā, Kālī, Karālī, Ariyāmmā, Mariyāmmā, Kāriyāmmā, Āṅkalemmā, Īśvarāmmā etc. are very commonly found. One may stand for warding off evil spirits while another for imparting fertility.

Śākambharī in Purāṇic Literature

In the *Mahābhārata* the deity Śākambharī is just an epithet of Durgā.

tato gaccheta rājendra devyāḥ sthānaṁ sudurlabham /
śākambharīti vikhyātā triṣu lokeṣu viśrutā //[2]

It is worthy to be noted that both Durgā and Śākambharī are totally in the naked form. This nudity is an important characteristic feature on both the deities.

The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* reads:

tato'ham akhilaṁ lokam ātmadehasamudbhavaiḥ /
bhariṣyāmi surāḥ śākair āvṛṣṭeḥ prāṇadhārakaiḥ //
śākambharīti vikhyātiṁ tadā yāsyamy ahaṁ bhuvi//[3]

'Next O Ye Gods, I shall support the whole world with the life-sustaining vegetables which shall grow out of my own body during a period of heavy rain. Then I shall gain fame on earth as Śākambharī.'

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1. M.K.Dhavalikar, *op.cit*, pp.286-287.
2. The *Mahābhāratam* : III. 84.13
3. The *Devī-māhātmya* section of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* : 85.45-46(a).

Besides, the *Śākambharī-Māhātmya* section of the *Skanda Purāṇa*[1] speaks of a place called Mahākūṭa, a seat of *Liṅga* worship. This Mahākūṭa is an important place of Śaivism in Bijapur district of Karnataka. There are a number of temples of Lord Śiva with Śiva-*liṅga-s*.

Even though the *Skanda Purāṇa* associates Śākambharī with this place, not a single temple of this deity can be found here today. However, there is a nude torso of a female deity. This female deity possesses very prominent breasts. Her legs are outstretched. The pudenda must have been prominently shown.But the portion below the waist is broken. There is a lotus in her right hand. The left hand is not visible. There is also a lotus on her head. Scholars differ in the identification of this deity. Kramrisch[2] identifies her as Aditi Uttānapāda. Dhere[3] feels that it is the figure of Lajjāgaurī. But after much argument Dhavalikar[4] comes to the conclusion that it is a figure of Śākambharī.

The *Skanda Purāṇa* places Śākambharī as a Goddess of fertility.

> *kṣemaṁkarī siddhikarī chinnamastā śubhānanā /*
> *śākambharī mokṣalakṣmīs trivargaphaladāyinī //*[5]

Here Śākambharī is described as one having no head. She is depicted as a headless deity.

So to sum up, Śākambharī is a nude Goddess connected with fertility. A naked woman in India has got an important role to play in the rituals associated with rain making.[6]

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1. The *Skanda Purāṇa* : VIII.19-23.
2. Stella Kramrisch, "The Indian Great Goddess", *History of Religions*, Vol.14,, No.4, 1975, p.251.
3. R.C. Dhere, *Lajjāgaurī*, Poona, 1978, pp.19-38.
4. M.K.Dhavalikar, *op.cit*, p.284.
5. The *Skanda Purāṇa* : 4.72.12; Also *cf.Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, 7.28.45-47 and *Śiva Purāṇa* : 5.50.35.
6. William Crooke, *Religion and Folk Lore of Northern India*, Oxford University Press, 1926, p.71.

Judged from the ethnological point of view, Śākambharī is worshipped by the modern tribals in South India even today. Most probably, this deity was worshipped mostly among the cultivators to ward off famine and drought. She is also connected with vegetation and fertility. The deity is confined to South India and has got relationship with agriculture.

6
Sapta Mātṛkā-s : Fictions and Facts

Madhusudan Mishra

Preliminary

In almost all the civilizations of the world which genuinely claim antiquity, the worship of the female-principle was prevalent in some form or other. This is also true to Indian civilization, particularly to the traditional Hindu religious thought in it. A number of female powers, named Mātṛkā-s have occupied an important and leading position in the cult of the Mother goddess, Though their number is not specified in ancient texts. It has been often limited to either eight or eighteen. There has also been much dispute and debate with regard to their nature. While some texts describe them as baby-blood-thirsty demonic spirits, some illustrate them as protecting powers. Because of such divergent opinions, it becomes truly difficult to get a distinct idea about them. An attempt has been made in this paper to dive into some such issues like their origin, development, number, nature, iconographic peculiarities so as to arrive at an acceptable conclusion regarding the Mātṛkā-s.

The Number Seven and the Mātṛkā-s

The number seven plays an important role in Indian religious tradition. In the *Śukla Yajurveda* (34.4) a reference has been made to the seven *hotṛ-s:*

yenedaṁ bhūtaṁ bhavanaṁ bhaviṣyat
pari gṛhitam amṛtena sarvam /
yena yajñas tāyate sapta hotā tan me
manaḥ śivasamkalpam astu //

Similarly, the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* (1.2.4) describes the seven tongues of Agni. The importance of the number seven is also manifest in the concept of seven seers (Kratu, Pulaha, Pulastya, Vasiṣṭha, Atri, Aṅgirā, Marīci), seven heavenly regions (Bhuḥ, Bhuvaḥ, Svaha, Maha, Jana, Satya, Tapaḥ), seven *pātāla-s* (Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Rasātala, Pātāla, Mahītala), seven Vedic sacrifices (*e.g.* seven *Somasaṁsthā-s* : Agniṣṭoma, Atyagniṣṭoma, Ukthya, Vājapeya, Ṣoḍaśī, Atirātra and Aptoryāma; seven *Haviryajña-s*: Agnyādheya, Agnihotra, Darśapūrṇamāsa, Āgrāyaṇa, Cāturmāsya, Nirūḍhapaśubandha, Sautrāmaṇī), seven metres (Gāyatrī, Uṣṇik, Anuṣṭup, Bṛhati, Paṅkti, Triṣṭup and Jagatī), *saptapadī, saptāśva, saptadvīpa, saptasvara* etc.

In the *Vanaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (215.16) there is a reference to unspecified number of female divinities. Even though the names of seven Mātṛkā-s have been enumerated in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (179.9.32), we come across at least 190 female deities in that context. Ten female divinities have been referred to in the episode on *Mātṛgaṇa* in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (5.28.13.73). However, the *Bṛhat Samhitā* (57.5.56) is silent on the number of Mātṛkā-s. Under such a circumstance, let us discuss the probable reasons that might have been the basis behind their number being limited to seven.

In the *Ṛgveda* (*RV*) 91.34.8) the word *saptamātṛkā* has been mentioned.

> *trir aśvinā sindhubhiḥ saptamātṛbhis*
> *traya āhāvās tredhā haviṣkṛtam /*
> *tisra pṛthivīr upari pradā divo*
> *nāṅka rakṣethe dyubhir hitam //*

Sāyaṇācārya explains the word '*saptamātṛ*' as the seven rivers like Gaṅgā and says:" *he aśvinā saptamatṛbhiḥ / imaṁ me gaṅge* (*RV* : 10.75.5) *ity ādi mantroktaḥ saptasaṁkyākā gaṅgādyā mātara utpādikā yeṣāṁ jalaviśeṣāṇāṁ te saptamātaraḥ* /. The *Ṛgveda* (10.75.5) says:

imaṁ me gaṅge yamune sarasvati
śutudri stomaṁ sacatā paruṣṇyā /
asiknyā marudvṛdhe vitastayā rjikīye
śṛṇuhy ā suṣomayā //

Just as mothers nourish their children by their breast milk, the rivers nourish the human being by assisting them in the production of corns by their waters and therefore the rivers are compared wth mothers. Because of the fact that the seven rivers like Gaṅgā, Yamunā etc. were immensely helpful to the Indian Aryans in their agriculture, they were addressed as mothers. *RV* (10.107.4) also mentions the word *saptamātara* in its *mantra*: *dakṣiṇāṁ duhate saptamātaram*, referring to a person having seven mothers. Besides, the *Atharvaveda* (*Śaunaka*:18.4.29), *Sūryatāpiny Upaniṣad* (5.12) also mention *saptamātara*.What could be the possible reason behind the number seven so intimately associated with our tradition? J.Gonda's[1] opinion regarding numbers in the Vedic literature is worth mentioning. He says: "The frequent mention of numerical concepts is largely conditioned by the belief that many important things are characterized by a fixed number that identity of number points to identity in essence; Then there are the almost inevitable three and seven, expressing modifications of the idea of totality: Indra is seven-reined bull who let loose the seven streams of flow (*ṘV*: 2.12.12)". The concept of *sapta* in saptamātṛkā has to be evaluated in that light. From this count it is evident that there is no valid reason behind the number seven being attatched to the Mātṛkā-s. Gonda (*ibid*, p.133) views such cryptic numerical statements to be conveying "esoterical information". This might have prompted the followers of *Śākta* tradition to attach the number seven with the Mātṛkā-s.

Birth of the Mātṛkā-s: The Purāṇic Accounts

While making any attempt to find out the genesis and

1. Gonda, J. *Vedic Literature* (Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas), Vol.I, Fasc. I, Wiesbaden, 1975, p.261.

growth of the concept of the Mātṛkā-s, it would be in the fitness of things to seek the help of the Vedic literature. In the first stage, some *śakti-s* are seen to have been associated with the great gods of the Vedic pantheon. In this context, Śacī draws our attention instantly. Sāyaṇācārya explains Śacī as Indrāṇī (*cf.* Sāyaṇa's commentary on *RV* : 1.106.6, 3.60.6, 4.21.5, 6.26. 6.26, 8.96.17). These Ṛgvedic passages may fairly suggest that Śacī was a competent active female counterpart of Śacīpati and probably a synonym of Indrāṇī.

In the *RV* (5.46.8) Indrāṇī finds first place among the *devapatnī-s: uta gnā vyantu devapatnīr indrāṇy agnāyy aśvinī rāṭ / ā rodaśī varuṇānī śṛṇotu vyantu devīr ya ṛtur janīnām //.* Elsewhere in the *RV* (10.86.10) Indrapatnī is seen to be participating in war. This is repeated in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (II.4.2). Thus, Indrāṇī is regarded as a deity presiding over battle and her trait is very similar to the later Śākta goddesses like Durgā, Cāmuṇḍā etc.[1].

The Purāṇic episodes narrating the birth of the Mātṛkā-s can be divided into two groups. While the first one connects the Mātṛkā-s with Kārttikeya and is narrated in the *Mahābhārata*, the second one relates them to goddess Durgā and gives them the status of the female consort of the gods.

The *Mahābhārata* (*Vanaparvan* : 215.16) mentions a number of goddesses. According to that account, Indra sends some goddesses to kill baby Kārttikeya who is just born. However, on being present on the spot, brest milk oozes from them immediately. They also ask Kārttikeya to welcome them as mothers. In this context, two goddesses have been narrated: one is born of anger and possesses a sharp weapon; the second is the daughter of the ocean, blood-thirsty and of red complexion. Even though only two such characters are depicted there, the rest, because of their similarity with

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1. Dharmadhikari, T.N. "Traces of Śāktism in Vedic Literature", *Studies in Śāktism*, ed. K.C. Mishra et al, Bhubaneswar, 1995, pp. 3-7.

regard to the nature and deeds, must have been of the same character (*Mahābhārata, Vanaparvan* : 215.21.22).

According to another account in the *Mahābhārata* (*Vanaparvan, Adhyāya* : 217), when Indra wields his vajra to kill the newly-born Kārttikeya, a number of ferocious deities are born from the latter. Among them Kākī, Hālimā, Mālinī, Bṛhalī, Āryā, Palālā and Vaimātrā are noteworthy. Here, even though Kārttikeya welcomes them as his mothers and divides them as divine and demonic creatures, still on the whole they have been illustrated as baby stealers. It is significant to mention here that while the first account is totally reticent about the birth of the Mātṛkā-s, the second one attributes their birth to the weilding of the thunder bolt of Indra.

The second group of episodes relates the birth of the Mātṛkā-s to Durgā. When Durgā was engaged in a fierce battle with Śumbha and Niśumbha, on her request the gods created their female powers that helped Durgā in her mission against the demons. Each female power took the form, vehicle and weapons of her respective male counterpart. Thus, the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (*Devī Māhātmya* : 8: 14) speaks.

yasya devasya yad rūpaṁ yathā bhūṣaṇavāhanam /
tad vad eva hi tacchaktir asurān yoddhum āyayau //

Accordingly, Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Nārasiṁhī and Aindrī were born from Brahmā, Maheśvara, Viṣṇu, Varāha, Narasiṁha and Indra respectively. Here it is remarkable that while Brahmā, Śiva and Kārttikeya created one goddess each, Viṣṇu along with two of his incarnations viz. Varāha and Narasiṁha created three goddesses. Here, along with the seven Mātṛkā-s, Cāmuṇḍā / Śivadūtī (created from the body of Devī) and Devī herself are engaged in the battle. Finally, at the end of the battle, the Mātṛkā-s having drunk the blood of the demons dance in pride. This account is also seen repeated in the *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (5.28.29) and *Vāmana Purāṇa*

(*Adhyāya* : 30), albeit in a slightly modified form. Indrāṇī stands first in the list of the forms of *Śakti* as enumerated in the *Brahmavaivartta Purāṇa* (*Śrīkṛṣṇajanmakhaṇḍa*: *Adhyāya* : 119):

indrāṇī vaiṣṇavī śāntā brahmāṇī brahmavādinī /
kaumārī nārasiṁhī ca vārāhī vikaṭākṛtiḥ //
māheśvarī mahāmāyā bhairavī bhīrurūpiṇī /
aṣṭau ca śaktayaḥ sarvāḥ...... //

Inspite of the fact that the *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* attribute the birth of the Mātṛkā-s to the gods, they are believed to be the manifestations of different forms of Devī. This is due to the episode narrated in the *Devī Māhātmya* (10.2.5). Herein it is described that consequent upon the kiling of Niśumbha by Devī and her associates (Mātṛkā-s), Śumbha appears in the battle field and challenges Devī to engage her in a battle with him. Devī accepts the challenge and absorbs the Mātṛkā-s in her. The Mātṛkā-s have been described as her different forms there. The *Vāmana Purāṇa* (30.3.a) makes it more clear and says that the Mātṛkā-s are born from different limbs of Devī and therefore they are not the female powers of the gods. Moreover, according to the *Vāmana Purāṇa* (56.3.9), from the face of Devī, Brahmāṇī was born, fom the throat Kaumārī, from the arm Vaiṣṇavī, from the back Vārāhī, from the breasts Māhendrī and from heart, Nārasiṁhī.

A third episode relates the birth of the Mātṛkā-s to Śiva. *Matsya Purāṇa* (17:9.32) describes that Śiva had created them to fight with Andhakāsura.Andhaka was endowed with a boon that whenever engaged in a battle, innumerable demons would be born from the drops of blood gushing out of his wounds and falling on the ground. The Mātṛkā-s were instructed to drink all drops of blood and were exceedingly gratified.

Sapta Mātṛkā-s and Sixty - four Yoginī-s

It is interesting to note here that the Mātṛkā-s have an

intimate relationship with the Yoginī cult of later years. The Yoginī-s are sixty four in number and have been classified according to the functions, names and rituals attatched to them. The first classification says about *kṣetrajā*, *pīṭhajā*, *yogajā* and *mantrajā* Yoginī-s. The *kṣetrajā* and *pīṭhajā* Yoginī-s are associated with the traditional *śākta pīṭha*-s, the *yogajā*-s with yogic practices and the *mantrajā*-s with *mantra-s*. While the Mātṛkā-s are classified as Yoginī-s, all Yoginī-s are not Mātṛkā-s. Therefore, it is believed that these seven Mātṛkā-s were multiplied into sixty four Yoginī-s at a later period[1].

The Nature of the Mātṛkā-s

Since the word Mātṛkā stands for mothers, one would think that the Mātṛkā-s are the protective powers of the universe. However, it is not true with the Sapta-Mātṛkā-s. They harm the human beings instead of being their protectors. By nature they are malevolent. Attempts have been made in later years to appease them by various types of worships.

We have already discussed the episodes regarding the birth of the malevolent Mātṛkā-s and their relation with Kārttikeya. According to the *Mahābhārata* (*Vanaparvan* : 219.00.23), once the wives of six seers falsely declared them as the mother of Kārttikeya. As a result, they were abandoned by their husbands. They approached Kārttikeya and requested him to accept them as his mothers. Accordingly, Kārttikeya agreed to become their adopted son. Later on Kārttikeya asked the Mātṛkā-s about their other desires. The Mātṛkā-s revealed two: 1) They will be worshipped as chief deities in the world and 2) they will destroy the newly born human babies, as they are deprived of the good fortune of getting an offspring, being abandoned by their husbands. Kārttikeya fulfilis their first desire, but becomes reluctant towards the second. Thereafter he requests them to protect

1. Das, H.C. "The Cult of the Sixtyfour Yoginis", *Studies in Śāktism*, ed. K.C.Mishra et al, Bhubaneswar, 1995, pp. 75-111.

the new born babies instead of destroying them. The Mātṛkā-s accept this request with the condition that they can torment them till they attain the age of sixteen. They will have undecaying malignant power and they will be worshipped by all.

In another episode of the *Mahābhārata* (*Vanaparvan*: 219.20-45) ten female powers have been referred to. They all are of inauspicious nature. They are: Vinatā, Pūtanā, Rākṣasī, Aditi (or Revatī), Diti, Surabhi, Saramā, Kadru, Lohitāyanī and Āryā. Except Vinatā and Lohitāyanī, all others do harm the babies and pregnant ladies. They are fond of flesh and wine and love to live in the closed rooms where new babies are born.

In the *Śalya Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (45th *Adhyāya*) 92 Nos. of Mātṛkā-s have been referred to, who are seen helping Kārttikeya, the general of the divine army, in his crusade against the demons. Inspite of the fact that some of the Mātṛkā-s are beautiful and of fair complexion, most of them are inauspicious and of mischeievious nature. Their being illustrated as long-nailed, long teethed, fierce looking, black complexioned, living in rivers, cross roads, mountains etc. reinforce their inauspicious character to a great extent.

However, the *Purāṇa-s* deliberately try to give them a divine colour by establishing a relationship with Devī or Śiva, illustrating them as the helping powers in Devī's war against the demons. Albeit such attempts, their real nature could not been hidden and they are described as malevolent forces in a number texts.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (2.10.37-39) includes the Mātṛkā-s among dangerous creatures like Rākṣasa-s, Piśāca-s, Bhūta-s etc. In another occasion (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa* : 10.63.6) they find a mention along with the Bhūta-s, Dākini-s, Vetāla-s and Preta-s, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (10.6.27-29) prescribes that the utterance of Viṣṇu's name dispels the danger from the Mātṛkā-s. The *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (1.22.7) vividly

describes the ways to get rid of the inauspicious influence of the Mātṛkā-s.

The *Varāha Purāṇa* (17.33-37) while drawing a comparison between the Mātṛkā-s and the inauspicious spirits says that Yogeśvarī represents desire, Māheśvarī anger, Vaiṣṇavī greed, Kaumārī passion/attatchment, Brahmāṇī pride, Aindrī jealousy, Cāmuṇḍā moral default and Vārāhī enmity. All these references conclusively prove the malevolent nature of the Mātṛkā-s.

From the above discussuion it is abundantly clear that attempts have been made at a later date to appease these spirits to get rid of their evil influences. Inspite of their being illustrated as the assistants and servants of Kārttikeya, they were originally created to kill him. Here Kārttikeya represents the child society. Even though he tried to modify their character, he was not successful in toto. It is noteworthy that female beings like Pūtanā, Jyeṣṭhā etc.in traditional Hindu religion and Hārita in Buddhism also represent such malevolent spirits causing harm to children. It is indeed amazing that while mothers are protectors in general, they also become baby-blood-thirsty-spirits. This riddle may be explained in the following manner.Psychologically issueless females become jealous of other's issues. Sometimes they cause injury to other's children. The psychological reason behind the worship of the Mātṛkā-s is to protect the children from the probable onslaught of the Mātṛkā-s. The traditional Indian behaviour of disfiguring the children by collyrium etc. is an indicator in this regard. Inspite of the Mātṛkā-s holding babies on their lap in their sculptural representations, their fundamental malevolent nature could not be hidden completely.

The relationship of the Mātṛkā-s with Kārttikeya, the son of Śiva, their dark complexion, abode in mountains, trees, rivers etc. ability to speak many languages propel us to think of their non-Aryan origin. Goddesses in traditional Hindu

pantheon don't have such attires and natue. In iconographical representations, the association of the Mātṛkā-s with Gaṇeśa and Vīrabhadra further strenghthens their non-Aryan genesis. Scholars vociferously speak of the non-Aryan origin of Śiva, Gaṇeśa and Vīrabhadra. Therefore, their intimate association with the Mātṛkā-s emboldens the view regarding the non-Aryan genesis of the Mātṛkā-s. In order to substantiate this supposition, it is now imperative to discuss in detail the iconographical representation of the Mātṛkās-s.

Sapta Mātṛkā-s in Traditional Iconography

The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (*Devī Māhātmya* : 8.14-21) tersely describes the features of the Mātṛkā-s. Accordingly, Brahmāṇī (born from Brahmā) carries a rosary and a water-pot (kamaṇḍalu) and is seated on a chariot with swan; Māheśvarī (born from Śiva) holds a trident, is seated on a bull and has a crescent moon and snake-bangle;Kaumārī has the peacock as her vehicle and *śakti* Vaṣṇavī (born from Viṣṇu) is seated on Garuḍa and holds a conch, a *cakra*, a mace, a bow and sword; Vārāhī (born from Viṣṇu's Varāha incarnation) is of the form of a boar; Nārāsiṁhī (born from the Man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu) is of the form of Narasiṁha, and Aindrī resembling Indra and having thousand eyes weilds a thunderbolt and is seated on an elephant.

The *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (*Adhyāya* : 119) describes the features of the Mātṛkā-s in a detailed manner. Accordingly, Brahmāṇī is four-faced, six armed, swan-vehicled, tawny coloured, decorated with ornaments and has a deer skin as her upper garment. In her right three hands she holds rosary, sruva and *varada mudrā* and in the left three hands, book, kamaṇḍalu and *abhaya mudrā*. Māheśvarī seated on a bull is five-faced, three-eyed, white-moon-coloured, matted haired, six-armed and holds rosary, damaru in her right hands and trident, bell and *abhaya mudrā* in the left

hands. Kaumārī is red-coloured, six-faced, of resplendent eyes like the Sun, peacock-vehicled and holds a *śakti*. She holds in her right hands banner, stick, pot and arrow and in the left, bow and bell; under her seat are lotus, axe and a cock. Vaiṣṇavī seated on Garuḍa is blue coloured, six-armed, decorated with *banamālā* and thousand lotuses and holds a mace, wheel, conch and *abhaya mudrā* in the left hand. Vārāhī is dark-complexioned and large-bellied and holds a stick, sword, shield, rope and *abhaya mudrā*. Cāmuṇḍā is seated on a corpse and ugly formed, has a snake as her ornament, emaciated and of skeletal body, of dreadful look, sunken-eyes and sunken-belly. She holds in her hands an iron stick, armour, arrow, hook, sword, shield, rope, bow, stick and axe. Aindrī is thousand-eyed, good looking, gold-complexioned, seated on an elephant and holds rosary, thunderbolt, Kalasa (pot) and vessel in her hands.

Vāmana Purāṇa (56.3-9) also describes the icongraphical details of the Mātṛkā-s, but with some differences. Among the notable differences are Māheśvarī being illustrated as serpent-bangled, Vaiṣṇavī as holding a bow, Vārāhī sitting on Śeṣanāga and digging the earth with her teeth and Nārasiṁhī disturbing the planets, strars etc. with her mane. According to the *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (8.18), Vaiṣṇavī wears a yellow garment, Cāmuṇḍā a garland of human skulls and Vārāhī the babies. All these details also determinedly speak of the malevolent attitude of the Mātṛkā-s.

Sapta -Mātṛkā Cult in Odisha

In the iconographic map of India Odisha occupies a unique place. Because of this fact, it has been the most fertile soil for the propagation of a number of religious traditions. Numerous shrines depict divergent religious faiths with fervor and fanfare. Particularly, Saktism has been pursued in this region very passionately for a long period of time. Traditonally, Odisha is famous as the first and foremost seat of *Śākta* faith (*oḍrākhyaṁ prathamaṁ pīṭham)*. Therefore, it is

quite natural that Saktism in its manifold forms got manifested in the religious shrines through out the length and the breath of Odisha. Accordingly, the images of Saptamātṛkā are found abundantly. Among them the set of seven Mātṛkā-s on the bank of river Vaitaraṇī in Jajpur is of paramount importance. Because of the fact that not only are all the Mātṛkā-s present there, they all are intact in their bodily forms and features. Besides, there are three other Mātṛkā idols preserved in the compound of the Sub-collectior's official residence at Jajpur. The seven Mātṛkā-s on the wall of the Mārkeṇḍeśvara tank at the Puri are also noteworthy. The other important places in Odisha where Mātṛkā images are found either in isolated form or in a set include the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, Vaitāla temple and Mukteśvara temple ceiling at Bhubaneswar, Sergarh(in Balasore district), Dharmasala(in Jajpur district) Kicakeśvarī temple in Khiching (in Mayurbhanj district), Kuṇḍeśvara temple at Saṭhalpur, Jaṭeśvara temple at Kalarahanga, Brahmeśvara temple, Barabil, Delanga, Puri, Garudi Pancana, Ghoral and Ranipur Jharial (in Bolangir district), Samalei Temple (in Suvarnapur district), Belkhandi, Abhana (Balasore), Caurasi (Praci Valley), Carccikā(Banki, Cuttack), Hirapur near Bhubaneswar, Siṁhanātha temple at Raghunathpur, Badamba, Cuttack, eight-armed Cāmuṇḍā of Aṅgeśvara temple in Pitapada, ten-armed Cāmuṇḍā in Kakatpur Mangala temple, twelve-armed Cāmuṇḍā in Niali Nuagan etc.

As I have said earlier, among the available Mātṛkā icons the ones available in Jajpur are of paramount importance. The idols of the Mātṛkā-s on the bank of the river Vaitaraṇī are not only intact but also iconographically correct. They are (1) Cāmuṇḍā (2) Vārāhī (3) Vaiṣṇavī (4) Aindrī (5) Kaumārī. Besides, an ugly looking idol of an old woman in a sitting posture is found there between Vaiṣṇavī and Kaumārī. Local priests identify her as Chāyā, the consort of the Sun and the mother of Yama. However, it is, in fact, the idol of

Śivadūtī. All Mātṛkā idols there are of six feet height and three feet breadth. The height of Śivadūtī is 6'3''. According to the *Devī Māhātmya* (8.28), Devī herself is known as Śivadūtī as she had engagaed Śiva as an envoy. It is important to note here that at many places Gaṇeśa and Vīrabhadra are also found along with the Mātṛkā-s. *Rūpamaṇḍana* (5.73) as a rule prescribes that Vīrabhadra should be placed before the Mātṛkā-s and Gaṇeśa, after them (*vīreśvaras tu ... mātṛṛṇām agrato abhavet / madhye ca mātṛkā kāryā ante teṣāṁ vināyakaḥ*). There is a Gaṇeśa temple just beside the Mātṛkā temple at Jajpur. The size of the idol of Gaṇeśa in that shrine is similar to that of the Mātṛkā-s. *Matsya Purāṇa* (262.38) also prescribes that the idol of Gaṇeśa should be created near the Mātṛkā-s It says:

> *suraktapuṣpabhūṣaṇā vardhanīdhvajasaṁyuktā /*
> *vināyakaṁ ca kurvīta mātṛṛṇām antike sadā //*

The idols of Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeśa are also found near the Mātṛkā-s on the wall of the Mārkaṇḍeya pond at Puri. The reason behind the presence of these two needs explanation. *Matsya Purāṇa* (179.8-90) tells that the Mātṛkā-s defeated the demon Andhaka at the express order of Śiva. At the end of the war, they declared to destroy the gods, demons and human beings. Śiva ordered them not to do so. However, they didn't listen to Śiva and started their destructive works. Śiva invited the Man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu, who created innumerable number of benevolent goddesses. They pacified the Mātṛkā-s and brought an end to their destructive deeds. At the end of this episode it is told that Bhairava, the dreadful form of Śiva, is also placed along with the Mātṛkā-s. This leads us to draw the hypothesis that with a view to keeping the Mātṛkā-s under control, Śiva had to take a dreadful form. This was done on the supposition that only one mischievous creature can control another creature of same nature. The Vināyaka form of Gaṇeśa is also of malevolent character. Śiva had created Vīrabhadra to take revenge on Dakṣa and had directed him to bring all

sorts of destructions to Dakṣa. Therefore, Vīrabhadra is originally a malevolent spirit. From the psychological point of view, only a malevolent male spirit can control the malevolent female ones adequately. Keeping this in view, either Śiva or his representatives like Vināyaka, Vīrabhdra etc. find a place with the Mātṛkā-s.

Mātṛkā-s are worshipped both in groups and in isolation. Carccikā at Banki, Vārāhī of Caurasi and the Cāmuṇḍā idols in Praci valley are the examples of Mātṛkā worship in isolation. In Praci valley except the Cāmuṇḍā-s no other Mātṛkā idols are found The Mātṛkā-s on the wall of the Mārkaṇḍeśvara pond at Puri are also placed independent of each other. Five Mātṛkā-s are available there. Four-faced and four-armed Brāhmī or Brahmānī is seated on a swan in *paryaṅka* posture. She is holding a baby on her left lap. In the right hand *vyākhāna mudrā* is seen. She is not decorated but matted-haired and wears a sacred thread. Māheśvarī is seated on a bull, but her arms are damaged.She is decorated and has a baby on her lap. Two of her arms are damaged. The dreadful form of Vārāhī is manifest from her upward going curly hair. In her left hand she holds a human skull and on the lap, a baby. She rides a buffalo. The idol of Indrani is highly attaractive. She has an elephant as her vehicle: her front side right hand and back side left hands are damaged. She holds thunderbolt and a baby.Among the Mātṛkā idols available in Odisha, the Vaiṣṇavī of Khiching and the two Cāmuṇḍā idols at Jajpur are of immense importance and reckoned as the vital example of artistic excellence. Till very recently, a third Cāmuṇḍā idol was being worshipped at Jaunlibandha at Jajpur on the Jajpur-Singhpur road. However, it is not seen now. Cāmuṇḍā images are also worshipped either as Pārśvadevī-s or as the presiding deity in Vaitala temple. The icon of the four-armed Brahmāṇī at Abhana (in Balasore district), Khiching, Siddheśvara and Trilocaneśvara temples at Jajpur, at Kapilasa hill(in Dhenkanal district), in Bhagavatī temple at Banapur(in

Khurda district), Puri etc. are the other significant examples of Mātṛkā-s in isolation. Besides, Mātṛkā-s are worshipped as Jāgulāi, Tarāsuṇī, Ugratārā, Bhuāsuṇī, (Bhū-vāsinī) Hiṅgulā, Vāsulī, Palāsuṇī, Olāsuṇī, Thāneśvarī (Sthāneśvarī), Jhāḍeśvarī, Samalei, Baruṇei, Nemālasuṇī (Nirmālyavāsinī), Carccikā (of Buddhist Tantra?), Sāralā (Śāradā of Jaina pantheon?) in different parts of Odisha.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it becomes amply clear that initially the number of the Mātṛkā-s was not fixed and they were considered as malevolent spirits. During the 4th and 5th century A.D. their number and names were gradually fixed. With the growing popularity of the Mātṛkā-s among the public, a deliberate attempt was made to modify their nature in the religious books with a view to giving them the status of benevolent goddesses. The amalgamation of tribal religious belief with that of the traditional Hindu religion gave rise to such a phenomenon. Tantric aspect of Buddhism also played a vital role in their popularity and promotion to deityhood. Inspite of all these attempts, the real nature of the Mātṛkā-s could not be hidden in totality and some of their malevolent aspects are still current in popular belief.

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7
The Purāṇic Genesis of Vindhyavāsinī

Banamali Biswal

Creation in general is an effect which presupposes a cause possessing creative power (*Sarjikāśakti*). This creative power is universally accepted as a feminine one, because no creation of animate being is possible without a motherly power (*Mātṛśakti*). If we imagine a creative power of the Universe as a whole, then we will have to go for a motherly power like *Śakti*, rather *Ādiśakti*. Some Western scholars feel that the concept of *Īśvara* is equally related to the mother goddess as to the father god.[1] Thus, it is quite possible that in the beginning of creation man might have worshipped the mother goddess first as he had worshipped the natural elements.

It is very difficult to say as to how old is the tradition of *Śakti*-worship in the world. Some of the oldest civilizations of the world like the Egypt and the Europe do appear as the worshippers of the mother divinity. The Sumerian races living in Mesopotamia worshipped a mother deity called Nanā. Surprisingly, this deity keeps much similarity with the Indian goddess Śerābālī as she is also mounted on the lion.

Śakti-worship in India is obviously very old. Mother Durgā is being worshipped here for thousands of years in several forms. Female divinities of the *Vedas* prove the Vedic

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1. Narendranath Chattopadhyaya, *Indian Mother Goddess*, p. 45

origin of *Śakti*-worship. In the *Pṛthivīsūkta* of the *Atharvaveda* (12.1.12) the earth is praised as mother (*mātā bhūmiḥ putro'haṁ pṛthivyāḥ*). The term *Śakti* is used in many Vedic *Mantra-s*. The terms *Māhānagnī* and *Mahānagna* used in the *Khilapāṭha* of the *Ṛgveda*[1] refer to the two aspects of *Sarjikā Śakti*. Some are of the opinion that *Mahānagnī* refers to Pṛthivī. One can find the traces of *Śākta*-tradition in several *Upaniṣad-s* like *Kena*, *Śvetāśvatara* and *Mahānārāyaṇa* etc. In the Upaniṣadic statement *parāsya śaktiḥ vividhaiva śrūyate*, *Śakti* refers to *Ādiśakti*. The terms like *Umā-Haimavatī* (*Kena-Upanisad*), *Kumārī Durgā* (*Mahānārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad*), the *Hiṁsikā Śakti Ambikā* (*Taittirīya Saṁhitā*), *Lohitaśuklakṛṣṇā Ajā* (*Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* : 4.5) *Asuraghnī Vāk* (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*) indicate that the Vedic and the Upaniṣadic people were also familiar with the *Śākta*-concepts. In the *Vāksūkta* (*Ṛgveda* : 10.125) and *Rātrisūkta* (*Ṛgveda* : 10.127) one can find the Vedic *Śaktivāda*. The *Vāksūkta* witnesses the *Kumārīpūjā* of *Śākta* tradition which indicates the awareness of *Śakti*-worship amongst the Vedic Aryans. However, the Vedic *Śakti* worship was in a symbolic form which was elaborated in the Purāṇic literature. In the present paper I am confined to the tradition of Vidyavāsinī worship in Vindhyācala in the light of the references available in the *Purāṇa-s*.

Hindu-goddesses are mainly divided into six categories, namely, Vedic goddesses (Sāvitrī, Gāyatrī etc.), mythological goddesses (Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Sītā, Rādhā, Kālī, Durgā, Mahādevī, Pārvatī etc.), goddesses associated with geographical features (Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Narmadā, Kāverī etc.), *Mātṛkā-s* (group of goddesses collectively known as mothers), the ten *Mahāvidyā-s* (group of goddesses particularly important in Tantrism) and the village goddesses (possessing different names related to a particular region or incidents).

Vindhyavāsinī is one of the important ancienct Hindu-

1. *Ṛgveda* : 5.22.9

goddesses related to *Śaiva* and *Vaiṣṇava* traditions, being worshipped in the *Mahāśaktipīṭha* Vindhyācala, the standard place of *Śaiva-Śākta*-tradition. The place was earlier known as Pampāpura and it is nearer to Mirzapur and Varanasi. History records that this city once had 150 temples all of which were destroyed by Aurangzeb (vide Mirzapur-A Gazeteer-1991, Vindhyācala). In the last part of 19th century Vindhyācala was renovated. During 1867-1923 Vindhyācala was under the Chetganj constituency of Mirzapur. In 1923-24 it was treated as an independent constituency under the Mirzapur Municipality.Since Vindyācala is nearer to Kāśī, both the places have religious influence on each other. The Sanskrit text *Vindhyamāhātmya* informs in detail about the geographical and religious aspects of Vindhyācala. The *Vindhyamāhātmya*[1] records in detail the *Pañcakośīparikramā* of Vindhyācala on the line of Kāśī's *Pañcakośīparikramā*. Under this *Parikramā* mostly the Śiva temples like Tārakeśvara, Bhṛṅgīśvara, Caturvedeśvara, Tīrtheśvara and Dharmaśāstreśvara etc. are covered. The Vindhyācala region can be devided into three sacred regions, namely, Trikoṇakṣetra, Śrāddhakṣetra and other *Kṣetra*-s of regional importance.

Trikoṇakṣetra is otherwise known as Mūlakṣetra and *Vindhyavāsinīyantra*. It covers seven kilometers from Nāgakuṇḍa to Aṣṭabhujā otherwise known as Vindhyakṣetra. It is known as Trikoṇakṣetra, because it begins in a triangular shape and ends with a square shape. This Trikoṇakṣetra comes under ward No.1-2 of Mirzapur. In fact, three main shrines (of Mahākālī, Aṣṭabhujā and Vindhyavāsinī) form this triangular shape. Several other shines also come under this *Kṣetra*. They are as follows: Kālīkhoha, Bhūtanātha, Bhairavakuṇḍa, Mahākālīmandira, Durgāmandira, Kṛṣṇamandira, Kharpareśvara, Bhairava, Phulamatī, Siṁha, Sarasvatī, Ghāghā, Śiva, Hanumān,

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1. *Vindhyamāhātmya*: 38-41

Dhvajasthala and Paṇḍoha etc. Similarly, Śrāddhakṣetra is also called as Rāmagayā where people offer *Śrāddha* on specific occasions like *Pitṛpakṣa*.

In addition, Vindhyācala is otherwise divided into four main *Kendra-s* related to Vindhyavāsinī, Mahākālī, Aṣṭabhujā and Rāmagayā. As has been said earlier, Vindhyācala possesses several *Śivaliṅga*-s and the temples of the goddesses like Mahālakṣmī, Mahākālī, Mahāsarasvatī, Agnidevī, Pretadevī, Mahāśakti, Vijayā, Dākinī, Śākinī, Lākinī, Kākinī etc.

In the Mahāsarasvatī temple situated inside the temple compound of Vindhyavāsinī, there are two images (*i.e.* of Mahiṣamardinī and Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa) carved out in the Gupta style. There are many other ancient images like Aṣṭabhujīkālakhoha etc. in the Vindhyavāsinī temple.

Vindhyavāsinī is considered as a mythological goddess on the basis of the references available in the *Purāṇa*-s, namely, *Harivaṁśapurāṇa, Devīpurāṇa, Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa, (Durgāsaptaśatī), Skandapurāṇa (Kāśīkhaṇḍa), Vāyupurāṇa, Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa, Śivapurāṇa, Bhaviṣyapurāṇa, Kālikā-purāṇa* etc. along with some of the ancient *Kāvya*-s, (both prose and poetry) like *Mahābhārata (Bhīṣmaparvan, Vanaparvan, Virāṭaparvan), Śāradātilaka, Kathāsaritsāgara, Gauḍabaho, Kādambarī, Harṣacarita, Caṇḍīśataka* (of Bāṇabhaṭṭa), *Bālacarita* (of Bhāsa) and *Merutantra* etc. However, scholars like V.C. Majumdar and N.N Choudhury have tried to establish the non-Aryan genesis of Durgā by highlighting the historical aspects of Vindyavāṣinī. According to Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya[1], the worship of Vindyavāsinī was predominant during the period of the Hūṇa-s.

When we talk of Devī-worship in India, we find Vindhyavāsinī or Mahiṣamardinī as the oldest Indian goddess. In the *Vāyupurāṇa* we find a list of the names of Hindu goddesses among whom Vindhyanilayā refers to

1. *Evolution of Hindu Sects*, Delhi, 1970, p.161

Vindhyavāsinī[1]. The oldest form of Vindhyavāsinī is available as Durgā in the *Śākta* tradition. In the *Devīpurāṇa* there is a reference to at least eighty shrines where *Devī* is being worshipped. However, most of them found place in the list of 108 famous *Pīṭha-s* of *Śākta* tradition. According to the *Devīpurāṇa*, ten mountain regions are famous as *Saktipīṭha*-s. They are: Malaya, Sahya, Vindhya, Himālaya, Arbuda, Citra, Gopa, Nara, Kāla and Nīca. In addition, six other places are also famous as *Śaktipīṭha*-s, namely, Laṅkā, Oḍradeśa, Strīrājya, Kāśikāvana, Kāmarūpa and Kāṁcī[2]. On the bank of the sacred rivers like Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Narmadā etc. the *Śaktipīṭha-s* developed.[3] The *Devīpurāṇa* says that the *Śaktipīṭha*-s, where the goddess grants boon without delay are also the *Siddhapīṭha-s* : *(ataḥ paraṁ pravakṣyāmi siddhasthānāni yāni tu / yasminn ārādhitā devī kṣipraṁ bhavati siddhidā)*. The famous *Siddhapīṭha*-s are: Mandāra, Śataśṛṅga, Trikuṭa, Vindhya, Aśvarathya, Śaṅkareśvara, Rāmeśvara, Amareśvara and Kuṇḍaleśvara.

In the ancient sculptures Devī-s are mostly depicted as naked. Some are of the opinion that the Buddhist female divinities such as Parnaśabarī and Nagnaśabarī refer to Vindhyavāsinī only. They feel so because, initially the goddess Vindhyavāsinī was worshipped by the naked Śabara-s (the forest tribes). In fact, the communities which deserted the Vedic traditions for some reason or other were mainly the worshippers of Vindhyavāsinī. Vindhyavāsinī is

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1. *dvāparāntavikāreṣu devyā nāmāni vai śṛṇu /*
gautamī kauśikī āryā caṇḍī kātyāyanī satī //
kumārī yādavī devī varadā kṛṣṇapiṅgalā /
bahirdhvajā śūladharā paramā brahmacāriṇī //
māhendrī cendrabhaginī vṛṣakanyaikavāsasī /
aparājitā bahubhujā pragalbhā siṁhavāhinī //
ekānaṁśā daityahananī māyā mahiṣamardinī /
amoghā vindhyanilayā vikrāntā gaṇanāyikā //
devīnāmavikārāṇi ity etāni yathākramam /
2. *Devīpurāṇa*: 9.4.6
3. *ibid*: 23.3, 93.176

many times compared not only with Vedānta's *Māyā* and Sāṁkhya's *Prakṛti* but also with some goddesses found abroad, namely, Nihnursaga (Sumerian), Istar or Astarte and Innana (Mesopotamian), Neith (Egyptian), Ma (Turkish). According to the *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*[1] and *Devīpurāṇa*[2] also the worshippers of Vindhyavāsinī are mainly tribals called Śabara-s, Barbara-s and Pulinda-s. They used to offer their Devī-s whatever was available to them. In the *Mahābhārata* and in some other *Purāṇa*-s it is said that she was worshipped with *Madya, Māṁsa* and *Paśubali*[3].The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* describes that Vindhyavāsinī is not pleased with flower and incense sticks etc. On the other hand, she is pleased with the sacrifice of buffaloes[4]. In addition, the *Skandapurāṇa*[5] refers to the relationship that exists between the Kirāta-women and Vindhyavāsinī. However, in the *Devīpurāṇa* in the context of *Devīpūjā* it is said that everybody has a right to worship her.[6] Hence she is also addressed as Vedagarbhā, Sāvitrī and Āryā.

Bāṇabhaṭṭa in both of his prose compositions, namely, the *Kādambarī* and *Harṣacarita* makes some descriptions of Vindhyavāsinī. In addition, his *Caṇḍīśataka* is solely dedicated to Vindhyavāsinī. Though *Devīpurāṇa* was written

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1. *śabarair barbaraiś caiva pulindaiś ca supūjitā /*
   ghaṇṭāninādabahulā viśrutā vindhyavāsinī // (*Harivaṁśam* : 2.3.6-7)
2. *śabarair barbaraiś cāpi pulindaiś ca supūjitā /*
   vindhyavāsinī vasaughe amoghe ambike śubhe //
   (*Devipurāṇa* : 39.9.42)
3. *sidhumāṁsa paśupriyā* (*Mahābhārata, Virāṭaparvan* : 6.17); *surāpiśitapūrṇābhyāṁ kumbhābhyām upaśobhitā* (*Harivaṁśa* : 2.25.53); *surāmāṁsabalipriyā* (*Harivaṁśa* : 2.2.52.3.12) *rudhiramāṁsamadyapriye* (*Devīpurāṇa* : 9,56).
4. *na tathā balidānena puṣpadhūpavilepanaiḥ/*
   tathā santuṣyate loke mahiṣair vindhyavāsinī //
   (*Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* : *Uttaraparva* : 4.138.18).
5. *vindhyavāsinī vindhyena kim abandhyaṁ tapaḥ kṛtam /*
   yatra maitri kirātibhir abhilabhyā tvayā samam //
   (*Skandapurāṇa* : *Maheśvarakhaṇḍa, Aruṇācalamāhātmya* :19.56)
6. *sarveṣu sarvavarṇeṣu: Devīpurāṇa, pra. pā. pṛ.*8

in West Bengal, still its theme revolves around Vindhyavāsinī. In the *Gauḍavaho*[1] there is a reference to the excess of sacrifice in Vindhyavāsinī temple. As per the Purāṇic evidences, it can be said that Vindhyavāsinī is the oldest mother divinity in India. She is established in many forms such as Durgā, Kātyāyanī, Mahiṣamardinī, Kauśikī, Ekānaṁśā and Vimalā.

The name Vindhyavāsinī is attributed to the deity because of her association with the mountain region of Vindhya. During the 20th century many important works have been written on Indian Śakti-cult. Some of them attribute the origin of Śakti-worship to the non-Aryan culture. They have probably arrived at such a conclusion because of the intimate association of *vāmācara* methods and *paṁcamakāra* (*madya, matsya, māṁsa, maithuna* and *mudrā*) with Śakti-worship.

Though the lore of Tantra developed as a *Śāstra* only in the post-Vedic period, still certain Tantric concepts are found even in the Vedic literature in an embryonic form. Even Amarasiṁha, the author of *Amarakoṣa* was not aware of *Tantra-Śāstra*. Kuluka Bhaṭṭa (the commentator of *Manusmṛti*) has quoted a verse from *Hāritasmṛti* : *śrutiś ca dvividhā proktā vaidikī tāntrikī tathā.*[2]

In the *Bhīṣmaparvan* and *Vīrāṭaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* one can find *Durgāstuti*, whereas in the *Vanaparvan*[3] of the *Mahābhārata* there is a reference to the Mātṛkā-s, Durgā, Kālī and Mahākālī. In another context of the *Vanaparvan*, Draupadī, Śrī, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī are prayed to protect Arjuna: *imā vai tava pānthāya pālayantu dhanaṁjaya.*[4] The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* states that Śakti has taken many incarnations and is worshipped in many forms.[5]

1. *Gauḍavaho*: verse No.300
2. *Manusmṛti*: 2.9
3. *Mahābhārata, Vanaparvan; Adhyāya*: 90 (*Skandopākhyāna*)
4. *Ibid, Adhyāya*: 33
5. *bhūyo bhūyo'vatāraiś ca bhavānī pūjyate śivā*: *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa, Uttaraparvan*: 137.22

The principal reason that is attributed to the incarnation of Vindhyavāsinī is the killing of the demons as described in the *Devīpurāṇa* :

trailokyadhāriṇī devī tvaṁ hi vindhyanivāsinī /
niśumbha-andhakādīnām asurāṇāṁ bhayaṇkarī /
kamsādīnāṁvadhārthāya utpannā lokapāvanī //

Similar reference is also available in the *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*[1]. She is also worshipped for many other purposes, namely, to get victory in the battle,[2] to protect the weaker sections of the society like the women, children etc.[3] Sometimes she is also prayed for granting *mokṣa*.[4]

In most of the *Purāṇa*-s Vindhyavāsinī is referred to as the daughter of Yaṣodā and the sister of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.[5] However, in some other *Purāṇa*-s and eulogies, she is also

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1. *vindhyavāsinīṁ durgaghnāṁ raṇadurgāṁ raṇapriyām*: *Harivaṁśapurāṇa, Viṣṇuparva*: 107.7)
2. *jayo bhavati me nityaṁ tvat prasadad raṇājire* (*Mahabharata, Bhīṣmaparvan* : 23.13). *saṅgrāme vijayapradā mam api vijayaṁ dehi varadā bhava sāmpratam*: *Mahābhārata, Virāṭaparvan*: 6.13)
3. *mantradravyakriyādhyānān mahāsiddhikarā nṛṛṇām/ strībālavikalāndhanāṁ ṣa bhavet sūkṣmasiddhidā* (*Devīpurāṇa* : 92.10)
4. *tvaṁ vaiṣṇavī śaktir anantaviryā*
   viśvasya bījaṁ paramāsi māyā /
   sammohitaṁ devī samastam etat
   tvaṁ vai prasannā bhuvi muktihetuḥ // (*Saptasatī* :11.5)
5. *yaśodagarbhasambhūtāṁ nārāyaṇavarapriyām/*
   nandagopakule jātāṁ māgalyāṁ kulavardhinīm//
   vāsudevasya bhaginīṁ divyamālyavibhūṣitām/
   divyāmbaradharāṁ devīṁ khaḍgakheṭakadhāriṇīm//
   (*Mahābhārata, Virāṭaparvan:* 6.2.4);
   gopendrasyānuje jyeṣṭhe nandagopakulodbhave (*Mahābhārata, Bhīṣmaparvan: 23,Āryāstava*); *bhaginī vāsudevaya, nandogopasutā caiva, bhaginī balakṛṣṇayoḥ, viṣṇubhaginī, bhaginī baladevsya*
   (*Harivaṁśa,Viṣṇuparva* : *Pra*.40);
   Gopendrasya bhaginī (*Kūrmapurāṇa, Pūrva* : 1.11.123); *śrīkṛṣṇabhaginī satī* (*Brahmavaivartapurāṇa, Prakṛtikhaṇḍa* : 1.142.*Uttaraparva*, 40); *kṛṣṇānujā* (*Bṛhaddharmapurāṇa, Uttaraparva*: 5.132); *gopakanyā yaśodānandinī* (*Bṛhaddarmapurāṇa, Pūrva* : 50.135); *sā vindhyavāsinī viṣṇor anujā varadeśvarī* (*Devī.Uttara* :10.2.63)

described as the sister of Indra. In the *Mahābhārata* she is described as the daughter of Himālaya and the killer of Kaṁsa and Mahiṣāsura:

mahiṣāsuramardinī kaṁsāsurabhayaṅkarī /
śailarājasute devī namaste vindhyavāsinī //

In the *Devīpurāṇa*, Vindhyavāsinī is referred to as *divyakanyā* (*śūlinī vindhyavāsinī divyakanyā*). In fact, until Devī is a virgin, she can destroy the demons (*kanyā divyā svayaṁ proktā kanyārūpā tu śūlinī/ yāvad akṣatayoniḥ syāt tāvad devī surārihā*). Kumārī-s are said to be eighteen in number. They are: Durgā, Nārāyaṇī, Śivā, Mahāmāyā, Yoganidrā, Kālarātri, Kapardinī, Ugracaṇḍā, Bhadrakālī, Ajitā, Aparājitā, Kātyāyanī, Mahākālī, Kamākhyā, Kulanāyikā, Bhairavī and Bhuvanaśī. Out of these names, the names like Durgā, Mahāmāyā, Yoganidrā, Kātyāyanī, Mahākālī, Ekānaṁśā etc. refer to the goddess Vindhyavāsinī.

Yoganidrā

In the *Purāṇa*-s Vindhyavāsinī has been recognized as Viṣṇu's Yoganidrā, because just like Yoganidrā she is also described as a *kumārī devī* (virgin goddess) in many texts like the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* and *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*[1] etc. Yoganidrā played an important role in Kṛṣṇa's birth. The name Yoganidrā occurs for the first time in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*[2]. She is also described as Mahāmāyā.[3] In fact, the philosophical interpretation of Vindhyavāsinī lies, to some extent, in her name 'Yoganidrā'. Though Yoganidrā and Ekānaṁśā are identical, still Ekānaṁśā is developed as an incarnation whereas the Yoganidrā is described as Kālanidrā. The

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1. *gaccha nidre mayotsṛṣṭām (Harivaṁśam* : 2.2.27)
viṣṇo-śarīrajāṁ nidrāṁ viṣṇoḥ nirdeśakāriṇīm
2. *yoganidrā mahāmāyā vaiṣṇavī mohitaṁ mayā /*
avidyayā jagat sarvaṁ tām āha bhagvān hariḥ //
(*Viṣṇupurāṇa* : 5.1, 71)
3. *vicitrakāryakāritvān mahāmāyā prakāśa saiva brahmavādīn api mohayatī mahāmāyā* : Śrīdhara.

Kṛṣṇajanma context is the oldest of the Purāṇic evidences available so far as the name Yogindrā is concerned.[1]

The story of Yoganidrā runs as follows: Being cursed by Hiraṇyakaśipu, Ṣaḍgarbha was lying in the water in Pātālaloka. Seeing him in distress Viṣṇu became sympathetic and absorbed himself in Nidrā. He then pulled the *prāṇa* of Ṣaḍgarbha and offered it to Nidrā. Consequently, Nidrā was directed to appear from him and to keep the *prāṇa* of Ṣaḍgarbha in Devakī's womb.[2] This indicates that Yoganidrā has the power to absorb Viṣṇu in herself and she also has the power to reunite the *Prāṇa*-s. This Nidrā was installed in Vindhyācala first and then she was worshipped in many places. The *Harivaṁśapurāṇa* refers to the two dwelling places of Yoganidrā, namely, Ākāśa[3] and Vindhyācala.[4]

Ekānaṁśā

From the statement '*ekānaṁśāṁ yogakanyām*'[5] it appears that Yoganidrā and Ekānaṁśā are identical. From the references in the *Bālacarita* it is clear that Bhāsa was well aware of Ekānaṁśā as he says: *ekāṁśaḥ patito bhūmāv ekāṁśo divam unnataḥ/ yāṁ nihantum ihodbhūtaḥ karaiḥ śastrasamujjvalaiḥ //.*[6] The oldest reference to Ekānaṁśā is available in the *Mahābhārata*.[7] However, Ekānaṁśā as the sister of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma is available first in the *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*.[8] In fact, Vaiṣṇavī Ekānaṁśā is placed between Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in the iconography. According

1. *nidrayā kālarūpiṇyā* (*Harivaṁśa* : 2.2.25)
2. *Harivaṁśa* : 2.2.26-69
3. *nirasyāmānā gagane sthānaṁ prāpsyati śāśvatam* (*Harivaṁśa* : 2.2.39)
4. *sa te vindhye nagaśreṣthe sthānaṁ dāsyati śāśvatam* (*Ibid*: 2.2.49)
5. *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*: 2.4.47 (*Mahābhārata, Vanaparva*: 218.8)
6. *Bālacarita*: 2.18)
7. *Mahābhārata: Virāṭaparva*: 6.6.32; *Vanaparva*: 218.7-8)
8. *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*: 2.4.47

to the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*[1] and *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa,*[2] she holds a lotus in her left hand and places her right hand in the waist. The iconography of Ekānaṁśā as described in the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* and *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* can be seen in Elora (cave No. twenty seven) and in the brass statue available in the Anantavāsudeva temple at Bhubaneswar.[3]

According to the *Mahābhārata,*[4] Ekānaṁśā is an epithet of Kuhu, the daughter of Aṅgīra. Since people get delighted (*i.e.* Kuhu-Kuhu) on seeing Ekānaṁśā she is onomotopoecally called Kuhu. According to the commentator Nīlakaṇṭha, Ekānaṁśā refers to the night associated with one *kalā* as he says:

ekakalā anaṁśā alpāṁśavatī alavaṇā
yavāgur itivad alpārthe naṁcottarā /
sa kuhur iti śruteḥ pratipadyaktā
amāvasyā kuhur iti prasiddham //

According to the *Vāyupurāṇa,*[5] Ekānaṁśā is the killer of the demon called Mahiṣa.

Kātyāyanī: In Bhāsa's *Bālacarita,* Vindhyavāṣinī is reffered to as Kātyāyanī.[6] The oldest celebrated form of Vindhyavāsinī is Kātyāyanī or Mahiṣamardinī. As is known from the *Purāṇa*-s, Kātyāyanī Durgā killed many demons including Mahiṣa. Hence such a name was attributed to her.

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1. *ekānaṁśā kāryā devī baladevakṛṣṇayor madhye/*
   kaṭisaṁsthitavāmakarā sarojam itareṇa codvahatī //
   (*Bṛhatsaṁhitā*: 58.37)
2. *ekānaṁśā.'pi kartavyā devī padmakarā tathā /*
   kaṭisthavāmahastā sā madhyasthā balakṛṣṇayoḥ //
   (*Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*: 3.85.71-72)
3. Laxman Prasad in his introduction to *Harivaṁmapurāṇa*, p.48
4. *Mahābhārata* :*Vanaparva* :chapter :218.7-8
5. *ekānaṁśā daityahananī mahiṣamardinī* (*Vāyupurāṇa* : 9.85.50)
6. *śumbhaṁ niśumbhaṁ mahiṣaṁ ca hatvā*
   kṛtvā kṛtvā sarāṁstān hitaśatruvakṣām //
   ahaṁ prasūtā vasudevavaṁśe
   kātyāyanī kaṁsakulakṣayāya // (*Bālacarita* : 12.20)

In the beginning, this name was very much in use for Vindhyavāsinī. Scholars are of the opinion that in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*[1] the word "*kātyāyanāya*" was used as a qualifying name for Vindhyavāsinī. Since the use is in masculine it has been justified as an *Ārṣaprayoga* in place of *Kātyāyanyaī*. Jitendranath Banerjee[2] tries to establish Kātyāyanī as the deity of the seers born in the *kata-gotra*. The Sanskrit lexicon *Vācaspatyam* records four meanings of the word *Kātyāyanī* : *i.e.* born in the *kata-Gotra*, the wife of Kātyāyana, Durgā who was born in *kata-Gotra* and the old window who wears grey-coloured cloth as worn by Kātyāyana's wife. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*[3] we come across a reference to sage Kātyāyana.The wife of Yājñavalkya was also known as Kātyāyanī[4] (*Bṛ* : 3.2.4). In addition, three more Kātyāyana-s are famous in Indian history: one who was born in Viśvāmitra's family, the son of Gobhila (the writer of *Karmapradīpa* and *Chandogapariśiṣṭa*) and *Vārttikakāra* Kātyāyana having the other name Vararuci.The *Bhaviṣya-purāṇa* describes Patañjali as a devotee of Vindhyavāsinī (*kātyāyanaś ca śiṣyo' bhūn mahāśaktasya dhīmataḥ*). Some are of the opinion that Vindhyavāsinī was being worshipped by the grammarian Kātyāyana hailing from Kauśāmbī, (Prayāga). May be, therefore, she was called Kātyāyanī. However, in the *Vāmanapurāṇa*[5] and *Kālikāpurāṇa*[6] we find the following story in this regard: being tortured by Mahiṣāsura the gods approached the trinity Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara. The trinity then created *tejaḥpuṁja* which

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1. *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* : 10.1
2. Benerjee, Jitendranath: " Some Aspects of Śakti- worship in Ancient India", Prabuddha Bhārata, Vol. 59.1954,pp.227-232
3. *Rāmāyaṇa* :1.7.5; 1.69.4; 2.67.3; 6.128.60;7.74.4
4. *Bṛhaddevatā* : 3.2.4
5. *Vāmanapurāṇa* : 18 1.13
6. *iti prakupyatāṁ teṣāṁ śarīrebhyaḥ pṛthak pṛthak /*
   niścakramuś ca tejāṁsi śaktirūpāṇi tatkṣaṇāt //
   tat tejobhir dhṛtavapur devī kātyāyanena vai /
   sandhukṣitā pūjitā ca tena kātyāyanī smṛtā // (*Kālikāpurāṇa* : 60.75-76)

went to Kātyāyana's *Āśrama*. Kātyāyana created a female-form out of it by taking several limbs from different gods. This fact gave rise to the name Kātyāyanī. Or she might have been named so because of being worshipped by Kātyāyana (*i.e.* son of Kātya born in Viśvāmitra's family).

The *Bālacarita*[1] of Bhāsa as well as the *Vāmanapurāṇa*[2] describe Kātyāyanī as the killer of Śumbha and Niśumbha along with Mahiṣāsura. The name Kātyāyanī occurs in the *Vāmanapurāṇa*[3], *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* (*Durgāsaptaśatī*)[4], *Bālacarita*,[5] *Kālikāpurāṇa*,[6] *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*[7] etc. She was mostly depicted as the killer of Mahiṣāsura. From Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Kādambarī* it is clear that Kātyāyanī refers to Vindhyavāsinī, because, he compares Vindhyavāsinī with Kātyāyanī (*pracalitakhaḍgabhīṣaṇā kātyāyanī vā*). His *Caṇḍīśataka* is also dedicated to Kātyāyanī (Vindhyavāsinī). In fact, Durgā was named Kātyāyanī at the end of the Dvāparayuga, since the *Vāyupurāṇa* enlists those names of Devī only at the end of Dvāpara (*dvāparāntavikāreṣu devyā nāmāni me śṛṇu / gautamī kauśikī āryā caṇḍī kātyāyanī satī*). It seems that the *Purāṇa-s* do not distinguish between Kātyāyanī and Kauśikī.

Kauśikī : Kauśikī seems to be the initial name of Vindhyavāsinī or Durgā. As Ekānaṁśā is described as the sister of Kṛṣṇa, similarly, Kauśikī is also said to be the sister of Indra. She is established both in Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava cults. The name Kauśikī is derived from Kauśika. In the *Ṛgveda*[8] as well as in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[9] Kauśika refers to Indra. In

1. *Bālacarita* : 2.18
2. *Vāmanapurāṇa* : 28.26
3. *Vāmanapurāṇa* : 18.16,28.23, 36.37,93.3, 93.16
4. *Durgā-Saptasātī* : *Adhyāya* : 11
5. *Bālacarita* : 2.18
6. *Kālikāpurāṇa* : 60.76
7. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* : 10.2
8. *Ṛgveda* : 1.10.11
9. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* : 3.34.9

the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*[1] and the *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*,[2] it is said in the context of Yoganidrā's birth that Indra accepted her as sister. Since Indra was born in Kauśika *gotra*, the goddess was named as Kauśikī (*yaśodākanyātvenotpannāyāṁ yogamāyāyāṁ kauśikendreṇa bhaginītve kalpanena viṣṇunā tasyās tannāmakarmavattvaṁ*).[3] Thus, tradition accepts Devī as Kauśikī because of her being associated with Indra. *Durgāsaptaśatī* says that Kauśikī was born from the body of Pārvatī when gods praised her to rescue them from Śumbha and Niśumbha.[4] In the *Śivapurāṇa* also a similar story is available. But the story differs in the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* where Pārvatī is described as fair-complexioned in the beginning and turning dark only after the black-coloured Kauśikī was born from her.[5] On the contrary, in the *Śivapurāṇa*[6] it is said that Pārvatī was originally born black and she turned fair later. In the *Vāyupurāṇa*[7] and *Matsyapurāṇa*[8] the origin and the naming of Kauśikī are described in the context of the penance of Umā while killing Śumbha and Niśumbha. The *Vāmanapurāṇa*[9] says that Śiva once joked with Pārvatī and

1. *Viṣṇupurāṇa* : 4.19
2. *Harivaṁśapurāṇa* : 2.2
3. Vide the word *kauśikī* in the *Vācaspatyam*
4. *evaṁ stavādiyuktānāṁ devānāṁ tatra pārvatī /*
   snātum abhyāyayau toye jāhnavyāṁ nṛpanandana //
   sā'bravīt tān surān subhrūr bhavadbhiḥ stūyate'tra kā /
   śarīrakoṣataś cāsyāḥ samudbhūtābravīc chivā /
   stotraṁ mamaitat kriyate śumbhadaityanirākṛtaiḥ /
   devaiḥ sametaiḥ samare niśumbhena parājitaiḥ //
   śarīrakoṣād yat tasyāḥ pārvatyāḥ niḥsṛtāmbikā /
   kauśikīti samasteṣu tato lokeṣu gīyate //
   (*Durgāsaptaśatī* : 5.84-87)
5. *tasyāṁ vinirgatāyāṁ tu kṛṣṇā'bhūt sā'pi pārvatī /*
   kāliketi samākhyātā himācalakṛtāśryā //
   tato'mbikāṁ paraṁ rūpaṁ vibhrāṇāṁ sumanoharām /
   dadarśa caṇḍo muṇḍaś ca bhṛtyau śumbhaniśumbhayoḥ //
   (*Durgāsaptasati* : 5.88-89)
6. *Śivapurāṇa, Vāyavīya Samhitā* : 25.1.39
7. *Vāyupurāṇa :* chapter : 86
8. *Matsyapurāṇa :* Chapter : 157
9. *Vāmanapurāṇa* : 28.15.27

addressed her as Kālī. Pārvatī got angry and became dark in anger. Later she had to perform penance to get rid of that colour. When the goddess left the dark *Koṣa* Indra installed her in Vindhyācala.

In the *Purāṇa*-s we find a reference to a river named Kauśikī (*i.e.*modern Kośī). According to the *Mahābhārata,*[1] *Matsyapurāṇa*,[2] *Bālarāmāyaṇa,*[3] *Vāmanapurāṇa*[4] and *Vāyupurāṇa,*[5] since Pārvatī had abandoned her *Kṛṣṇakoṣa* on the bank of this river, the river was named as Kauśikī. Others feel that since Devī wore a *kauśeyavastra,* she was called Kauśikī[6]. However, that *kauśeyavastra* may be either blue[7] or yellow.[8] According to the *Matsyapurāṇa,*[9] Rātri entered into the body of Pārvatī on Brahmā's instruction and came out of Pārvatī's body as Kauśikī.

In many other *Purāṇa*-s like *Mārkaṇḍeya,*[10] *Vāyu,*[11] *Harivaṁśa*,[12] *Matsya,*[13] *Śiva,*[14] *Kālikā*[15] etc. Kauśikī is depicted as Yogamāyā or Viṣṇumāyā. Our tradition accepts owl as the *Vāhana* (vehicle) of Lakṣmī. However, *Devīpurāṇa*[16] describes owl (Kauśika) as the *Vāhana* of Kauśikī. From this

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1. *Mahābhārata : Ādiparva* : 215.7;*Vanaparva* : 84.132
2. *Matsyapurāṇa* : 22.63,114.22
3. *Bālarāmāyaṇa* : 1.34.7-9
4. *Vāmanapurāṇa* : 78.5.902,54.22.24
5. *Vāyupurāṇa* : 45.94,99.85.88,108.81
6. *Devīpurāṇa* : 3.7.19
7. *nīlakauśeyadhāriṇī* : (*Harivaṁśa* : 2.2)
8. *kauśikī pītavāsinī* (*Mahābhārata, Bhīṣmaparva* : 2.3); *pītakauśeyadhāriṇī* (*Matsyapurāṇa* : 157.14 : *Uttara*)
9. *Matsyapurāṇa* : Chapter-157
10. *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa:Saptaśatī* : Chapter- 5
11. *Vāyupurāṇa* :Chapter-8
12. *Harivaṁśapurāṇa* : 2.2,2.3
13. *Matsyapurāṇa* : 5.178.81'
14. *Śivapurāṇa* : Chapter 28
15. *yoganidrā mahāmāyā mūlprakṛtīti matā /*
    tasyāḥ prāṇasvarūpeyaṁ daivī yā kauśikī smṛtā //
    (*Kālikāpurāṇa* : 61.73-74,31.61)
16. *kauśikī kauśikārūḍhām* (*Devīpurāṇa* : 50.167)

fact, her relationship is indicated. On the other hand, being a *Kanyā*, Yoganidrā is shown as mounting a lion.[1]

Vanadurgā: Amongst the *Tāntrikavigraha-s* of Vindhyavāsinī Vanadurgā is famous.The *Śakti* which is described in the *Purāṇa-s* is known as Vindhyavāsinī and the *Śakti* which is depicted in Tantra-s is known as Vanadurgā. As the name indicates, Vanadurgā is worshiped in the forest.The description of Vanadurgā as available in the *Merutantra*[2] refers to Vindhyavāsinī.A *sūkta* in the *Ṛgveda*[3] is dedicated to Araṇyānī which also may refer to Vanadurgā, fond of living in the woods. The worship of Vanadurgā is performed for several purposes, says the *Śāradātilaka*.[4] She is also worshipped for *māraṇa*, *mohana*, *vaśīkaraṇa*, *uccāṭana*, *stambhana* and *vidveṣaṇa*[5] etc. In the *Śāradātilaka* eight mythological Devī-s, namely, Āryā, Durgā, Bhadrā, Bhadrakālī, Ambikā, Kṣemā, Vedagarbhā and Kṣemaṅkarī are enlisted. They are famous as *Aṣṭasakti*-s (or the eight powers).

Various Features of Vindhyavāsinī

In the *Śāradātilaka* two images of Devī are reflected *i.e.* (1) philosophical and (2) the killer of the demons (*i.e. Mahāsakti*). She is described as three-yed, sitting on the lotus, maintaining *abhayamudrā*, having moon on her head, adorned with ornaments like graiveya, aṅgada, necklace and ear ring, prayed by the gods headed by Indra, having lion on the left side, burning like *pralayāgni*, crescent on the head, adorned with śaṅkha, cakra, kṛpāṇa, kheṭaka, cāpa, bāṇa, karoṭikā, śūla etc. and above all as the winner of the demon-army.[6]

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1. *siṁham āruhya kanyātve nihato mahiṣo yathā /*
   mahiṣaghnī tato devī kanyā vai siṁhavāhinī // *Devīpurāṇa* : 37.13
2. *vanadurgā sthitā gaṅgāpāre tasyāṁ manoḥ śṛṇu* :*Merutantra*,verse- 6
3. *Ṛgveda* :10.146
4. *Śāradātilaka* :8.63-65
5. *Ibid* :11.78-122
6. (a) *sauvarṇāmbujamadhyāṁ trinayanāṁ saudāminīsannibhāṁ /*
   śaṅkhacakravarābhayānī dadhatīm indoḥ kalāṁ bibhratīm //
   graiveyāṅgadahārakuṇḍaladharām ākhaṇḍaladyaiḥ stutām /
   dhyāyed vindhyanivāsinīṁ śaśimukhīṁ pārśvasthapaṁcānanām//
   (*Śāradātilaka* : 11.71)

According to the *Matsyapurāṇa,*[1] Kauśikī, Rātri, Umā, Ekānaṁśā and Vindhyavāsinī are identical.The *Kaumudīmahostava* records a verse which is as follows: *lokākṣiḥ bhagavatyaiva vindhyācalanivāśinī/ lokarakṣitaḥ kuladaivataṁ hi yadūnām ekānaṅgā.*[2] Here the name Ekānaṅgā refers to Ekānamśā. In the *Trikāṇḍaśeṣa*, Ekānaṁśā is mentioned as a name of Pārvatī. The *Matsyapurāṇa*[3] and *Brahmavaivarttapurāṇa*[4] accept Umā as the part of Pārvatī. The *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* records that it is Vindhyavāsinī who was born in Nanda's house and killed the demons Śumbha and Niśumbha.[5]

According to the *Kaumudī-Mahotsava* and *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*[6] the Yādava-s worshipped Vindhyavāsini Ekānaṁśā as their family deity. The *Devīpurāṇa* is the first text which establishes Umā as the incarnation of Vindhyāvasinī. The *Matsyapurāṇa, Brahmavaivarttapurāṇa*[7] and *Harivaṁśapurāṇa* accept Ekānaṁśā Vindhyavāsinī as the sister of both Viṣṇu and Umā and she is described as born from a partial incarnation of Pārvatī.

Vindhyavāsinī in the Context of Killing the demon Mahiṣa

The killing of the demon Mahiṣa was one of the important achievements of Vindhyavāsinī's incarnation. In the *Ṛgveda,*

(b) *kālapāvakasannibhāṁ kalitārdhacandraśiroruhām/*
bhālanetravibhūṣitāṁ bhayadāyi siṁhaniṣeduṣīm //
śaṅkhacakrakṛpāṇakheṭakacābāṇakaroṭikām /
śūlavāhibhūjāṁ bhaje vijitāribalāsurasainikām //(*Śāradātilaka* : 11.77)

1. *Matsyapurāṇa*: 154.56, 74, 75; 157, 16, 19
2. A verse of *Kaumudīmahotsava* quoted in *Indian Culture,* Vol. IV,p.212
3. *Matsyapurāṇa*: 154. 74-75
4. *Brahmavaivarttapurāṇa* : *Śrīkṛṣṇajanmakhaṇḍa*: 7.130
5. *nandagopagṛhe jātā yaśodāgarbhasambhavā /*
tatas tau nāśayiṣyāmi vindhyācalanivāśinī // *Saptaśatī* 11.42
6. *Harivaṁśapurāṇa* : 2.4.43-48
7. (a) *ekānaṁśā ca sā durgā śrīkṛṣṇabhaginī satī* (*Brahmavaivartapurana* : *Prakṛtikhaṇḍa* :1.141)
(b) *ekānaṁśeti vikhyātā pārvatyaṁśasamudbhavā* (*Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* : *Prakṛtikhaṇḍa* : 7.130)

the term *Mahiṣa* is used in many senses, such as, animals,[1] Soma, Indra,[2] Sūrya,[3] fire in the form of lightning (*vidyud-agni*)[4] and atmospheric deities (*antarikṣasthānīya devatā*).[5] A comparison of the killing of Mahiṣāsura by mythological Katyāyanī (Vindhyavāsinī) has been made with the killing of Vṛtra by Indra in the *Ṛgveda*.[6] It is said there that Indra was advised to cook hundreds of Mahiṣa-s and to drink wine to kill Vṛtrāsura. While explaining the *mantra "yadi pravṛddha satpate sahasraṁ mahiṣo aghaḥ/āditta indriyaṁ mahipravāvṛdhe"*[7] Sāyaṇa says that the term *Mahiṣa* is used here to denote demon: *sahasrasaṁkhyākān mahiṣān mahannāmaitat mahato'surān vṛtrādin yadi yadā aghaḥ avadhiḥ*.[8] However, from this it is not clear whether the Purāṇic Mahiṣāsura had any relation with the Vedic Mahiṣa.

The story of Mahiṣāsura's origin differs from one *Purāṇa* to another *Purāṇa*.The *Devī-Bhāgavata* elaborates the story available in the *Vāmanapurāṇa* and accepts Rambha as Mahiṣāsura's father and Mahiṣa as his mother, whereas the *Varāhapurāṇa* presents a totally different story and accepts a Ṛṣi as his father and Māhiṣmati as his mother who has been cursed to become a Mahiṣa. In the *Durgāsaptaśatī* nothing is told about the said story relating to the birth of Mahiśāsura.W. Crook, however, quotes the story of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* and says: Mahiṣāsura was the son of Diti and was born when all other sons of Diti were killed by Indra.[9]

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1. *Ibid* : 8.98.15
2. *Ibid* : 3.46.2
3. *Ibid* : 10.189.2
4. *Ibid* : 10.8.1
5. *Ibid* : 6.8.40
6. *Ibid* : 6.17.11
7. *Ibid* : 8.12.8
8. Sāyaṇa on *Ṛgveda* : 8.12.8
9. For details, see *Mahāśaktipīṭha Vindhyācala* by Prakash Pandey, pp. 162-163.

The Iconographic Development of Mahiṣamardinī Vindhyavāsinī (Katyāyanī)

It seems that the two-armed form of Durgā is the oldest in Indian tradition. A clay-made image (*mṛṇmūrti*) available in Tonk District of Rajasthan has been accepted by R.C. Agrawal as the oldest image of Mahiṣamardinī. He accepts it as belonging to the 1st century B.C. to middle of 1st century A.D.[1] Another white clay-image belonging to 1st century A.D. is available in Sambhar district of Rajasthan. In Mathura museum six images of Mahiṣamardinī are available of which five have six hands and one has four hands. However, she does not have a lion with her. Here the goddess is seen wringing the neck of Mahiṣāsura. Two icons of the deity having six hands are available in Gwalior museum. In Chadragupta II's Udayagiri (Bhilsa) cave-inscription, Mahiṣamardinī is seen adorned with many weapons. This icon has twelve hands and she is associated with Navadurgā-s. Other Devī-s have sixteen hands. The images of Aihole (Bijapur) and Haripur (Mayurbhanj, Odisha) belonging to 6th-7th century A.D. have eight hands. Both the images have lion on their left side. The only difference is that while the lion of Aihole is in a calm posture, the lion of Haripur is in as attacking pose. They are seen killing the demon Mahiṣa in his animal form by the help of a trident. The image of Elora cave has been made as per the guidelines given in the *Vāmanapurāṇa* and the *Saptaśatī*. It is mounted on a lion and has eight hands killing the demon in his human form. Some soldiers are sketched as dead and falling scattered here and there. In Bangladesh one can find two types of images i.e. amicable and ferocious. Both are depicted in *Lalitāsana* and in *Tribhaṅgī Mudrā*.[2] During the rule of Meruvartman (8th

1. Agrawal,R.C. "A Terracota Plaque of Mahiṣamardinī Nagar", Lalitakalā,1-2,New Delhi,1953,p.73.
2. Rahman, M. "A new type of Mahiṣamardinī from Bangladesh", *Studies in Ancient Indian History*: D.C. Sarkar Felicitation Volume, ed. Dasgupta and others, 1988, pp.168-176.

century A.D.), we get a brass image of the goddess having four hands, holding the tail of a buffalo and attacking it in the back by a trident.

According to P.V. Kane,[1] as regards the story regarding the killing of the demon Mahiṣa, the one available in the *Varāhapurāṇa* is the oldest. According to the *Varāhapurāṇa*, Mahiṣāsura was killed on the Mandara mountain (the eastern range of Vindhya). However, according to the *Padmapurāṇa*, during the Svāyambhuva-*manvantara*, Mahiṣāsura was killed on Mandara mountain, whereas in Vaivasvata-*manvantara* he was killed on the Vindhya mountain.The *Vāmanapurāṇa* relates this story to the Vaivasvata-*manvantara* whereas *Durgāsaptaśatī* (of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*) does not mention any time for this incident. *Mahiṣaghātinī* Kātyāyanī is not treated as a deity belonging to any class or school though the *Varāhapurāṇa* reflects a pure Vaiṣṇavite vision in this regard. The *Devīpurāṇa* accepts *Siṁhavāhinī Kanyā* as the killer of Mahiṣa.[2]

Thus, nothing in exactness can be said about the iconography of Vindhyavāsinī. The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* depicts Ekānaṁśā as two-handed (*dvibhujā*). Gopinath Rao[3] on the basis of the references given in the *Suprabhedāgama*, *Pūrvakarmāgama* as well as *Uttarakarmāgama* describes Durgā as two-armed. In the *Śāradātilaka* also there is a reference to the meditation of *dvibhujā* (deity). In the clay-image of Kuṣāṇa era discovered from Aichatra and in a stone-image of pre-Gupta age one can find *dvibhujā* Kātyāyanī (Mahiṣamardinī). V. Mishra[4] holds the view that two-armed images were available from ancient times till the medieval and post-medieval period. Similarly, the stone images (7th-9th century)

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1. Kane, P.V. *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol.V. part-1, p.155.
2. *siṁham āruhya kanyātve nihato mahiṣo yathā/*
   mahiṣaghnī tato devī kanyā vai siṁhavāhinī // *Devīpurāṇa* : 37.13
3. Rao, Gopinath, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, pp.103-105.
4. V. Mishra, *Mahiṣamardinī*, p.28.

noticed in Mysore and south Karnataka (Mohammadpur, Dist, Tidhera) have two hands[1]. Shantilal Nagar[2] is of the opinion that the wooden images existing in Kerala (12th century) as well as the Basholi pictures (18th century) also have two hands.

Conclusion

The abouve discussion leads us to the following conclusions.

- Though the tradition of worshipping a mother goddesses or *sakti* comes down rightly from the Vedic age, the goddess Vindhyavāsinī has a Purāṇic origin.
- Though Vindhyavāsinī is being worshipped in many places in India, still Vindhyācala (near Mirzapur and Varanasi in U.P) is her original place of worship.
- Yoganidrā of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, Yogakanyā of the *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*, Mohinī of the *Vāyupurāṇa*, Mahāmāyā and Mahogracaṇḍā of the *Kālikāpurāṇa* are identical and they all are used for Vindhyavāsinī.
- In the *Kūrmapurāṇa* (1.12.93.103) the terms like Karṣiṇī, Rātri, Caṇḍī, Sarojanilayā etc. are used as qualifiers of Vindhyavāsinī.
- Ekānaṁśā, Vindhyavāsinī, Mahālakṣmī, Mahāsarasvatī etc. are the different names of a single divinity. In fact, the names of the goddesses preceded by *mahā* as the qualifier (*e.g.* Mahālakṣmī, Mahāsarasvatī, Mahākālī refer to the virgins *i.e. Kumārī*-s) and they are powerful with *Vaiṣṇavīśakti-s*.
- Vindhyavāsinī is described as a deity assisting Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in the *Harivaṁśapurāṇa* (2.24), *Viṣṇupurāṇa* (5.1, 2), *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (10.3) and *Devībhāgavatam* (4.23).

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1. *Ibid*. p. 16, 18, 33, 67.
2. Shantiḷal Nagar, *Mahiṣamardinī in Indian Art*, p.77.

- Vindhyavāsinī took this incarnation to kill demons like Śumbha and Niśumbha along with Mahiṣa (*Harivaṁśa*: *Viṣṇuparvan* and *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*: *Saptaśatī*). Surprisingly, in the *Devīpurāṇa* it is said that she was born to kill Kaṁsa (*kaṁsādīnāṁ vadhārthāya utpannā lokapāvanī*).
- Ekānaṁśā is also an incarnation of Durgā in the form of Kumārī Devī.
- Ekānaṁśā is identical with *Vaiṣṇavī Śakti* Yogamāyā born in Yaśodā's home.
- In the *Mahābhārata*, both Ekānaṁśā and Subhadrā are regarded as the sisters of Kṛṣṇa.
- In the later works like the *Skandapurāṇa*, *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa* and *Pāṁcarātra* etc. Ekānaṁśā and Subhadrā are also regareded as identical. In fact, Vimalā (*Śākta -Rūpā*) and Subhadrā (*Vaiṣṇava-Rūpā*) being worshipped at Purī temple, are just the two shades of Ekānaṁśā.
- Amongst the different names of Vindhyavāsinī, most probably Kauśikī was earlier to Ekānaṁśā and her place was in the Vindhyācala.
- Though Kauśikī and Kātyāyanī are accepted as one and the same in the *Vāmanapurāṇa* (ch.18 and 50), they are described to have appeared at different times and on different occasions.However, both of them had killed Mahiṣāsura, Śumbha and Niśumbha in the Vindhyācala. On the other hand, the *Durgāsaptaśatī* mentions Himālaya as the place where these two demons were killed.
- In the *Śivapurāṇa* one can see an appropriate form of Vindhyavāsinī Kauśikī. Sometimes she is described as amicable, sometimes as furious and sometimes both. She is sometimes described as three-eyed, some times having four hands, some times six and some times having eight and twelve hands. However, her two-armed form seems to be the oldest. Sometimes she is described beautiful

and fair-coloured, while sometimes as dark-coloured. She is described having a shining body, bell in hand, adorned with various types of ornaments, wearing a yellow-coloured velvet cloth and shining like dark clouds.

- Though she is depicted as a tribal goddess in many *Purāṇa-s*, still evidences prove that she was a Universal goddess. In the *Kaumudīmahotsava* and *Harivaṁśapurāṇa* she is described as the family deity of the Yādava community.
- She has been depicted as fond of battle (*Raṇapriyā*), bestower of victory (*jayadātrī*), protector of the weaker and the killer of the demons. Sometimes she has been described as fond of wine, meat and beasts, especially buffaloes, offered as *bali* in sacrifices (*surāmāṁsavalipriyā*).
- She is capable of infatuating even the *Brahmavādin*-s and performing many sorts of miraculous activities. These qualities are well expressed from her names like Nidrā, Yoganidrā, Kālanidrā, Viṣṇunidrā, Yogakanyā, Māyā, Mahāmāyā, Rātri and Kālarātri.

  (*śaiva brahmavādin api mohayati mahāmāyā/ vicitrakāryakāritvān mahāmāyā*)
- The goddess Vanadurgā has been described as none other than Vindhyavāsinī. The only difference is that while in the *Purāṇa*-s she is described as Vindhyavāsinī, in Tantra texts she is described as Vanadurgā (famous for being worshipped in the forest atmosphere).

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8
A Glance at the Female Divinities of Purī

P.K. Mishra

Not only as the *sanctum sanctorum* of Lord Jagannātha but also as a place of pilgrimage, is Purī well designed with many divinities all around. The four *āśrama*-s, eight Śambhu-s, eight Mātṛkā-s etc. are the places of worship for the devotees here. They use to visit them on the fifth day of the dark Mārgaśīrṣa as *pañca-tīrtha-parikramā* by covering about five *krośa*-s of distance. The present paper intends to focus its attention on the female divinities worshipped in Purī with a view to acquainting the readers with them in detail.

The *Skanda Purāṇa* (2.2.4.39-44) refers to eight female divinities that are established in eight different quarters of Purī for the protection of the *antarvedī*. Thus runs the text:

antarvedīrakṣaṇārthaṁ śaktayo'ṣṭau prakīrtitāḥ /
ugreṇa tapasā pūrvam ahaṁ rudreṇa bhāvitā // (2.2.4.39)

tadādiṣṭā mayā bhadre vacanaṁ me priyaṁ kuru /
antarvedīṁ rakṣa mama paritas tvaṁ svamūrtibhiḥ // (2.2.4.41)

sā tu tiṣṭhati mat prītyā aṣṭadhā dikṣu saṁsthitā /
maṅgalā vaṭamūle tu paścime vimalā tathā // (2.2.4.42)

śaṁkhasya pṛṣṭhabhāge tu saṁsthitā sarvamaṅgalā /
ardhāṁśanī tathālambā kuberadiśi saṁsthitā // (2.2.4.43)

kālarātri dakṣiṇasyāṁ pūrvasyāṁ tu marīcikā /
kālaratryas tathā paścāt caṇḍarūpā vyavasthitā // (2.2.4.44)

Marīcikā, Maṅgalā, Dakṣiṇakālī, Caṇḍarūpā, Vimalā,

Sarvamaṅgalā, Alāmbā and Ardhāśani are established in different quarters for the purpose. The reference of the *Skanda Purāṇa* is probably the earliest one regarding the circle of female divinities of that time. However, with the gradual increase in the population of the city, the number of the divinities increased to thirty six, in addition to the minor ones worshipped in the newly established colonies. This increase from eight to thirty six may have been possible due to the expansions which are quite distinct from their existence and totography. In shape, not only the temple but also the entire Purī town resembles with the skull of a tortoise. The gradual deposit of silt and sand and the resultant expansion of habitation could have necessitated people to establish the female divinities of their choice for worship during family rituals like marriage, sacred thread ceremony and common social festivals. Besides the above mentioned eight major female divinities, the other minor ones found in Puri are enumerated below with their places of worship:

1. Alāmbā (Ālamcaṇḍī): Atharanala
2. Rāmacaṇḍī : Banki Muhana
3. Jhāḍeśvarī : Ghoda Bazar
4. Rāmacaṇḍī : Ramacandisahi
5. Hāṭayoḍi : Daitapatisahi
6. Buḍhīmā : Talanuasahi (Heragaurisahi)
7. *Māusimā (Ardhāśanī) : Grand Road
8. *Mārīcī : (Maricikota) Grand Road
9. Carccikā : Grand Road
10. Uttarakālī : (Navatapanagali) Matimandapasahi
11. *Dakṣiṇakālī (Kālarātri) : Kalikadevisahi
12. Gachakālī : Khuntiasahi
13. Śyāmākālī : Tiadisahi
14. *Vārāhī (Caṇḍarūpā) : Balisahi
15. Vāṭakālī : Uansadanda

16. Kṛṣṇakālī : Pandu-asrama:Jambesvara
17. Kāmākṣā : Tiadisahi
18. Maśāṇicaṇḍī : Katikipentha
19. Vaselī : Vaselisahi
20. *Sarvamaṅgalā : Vaselisahi
21. Jahnikhāi
22. Nārāyaṇī : Durgamadhava
23. Ṣohalapua-mā : Radhavallabhamatha
24. Śmaśānakālī : Svargadvara
25. Yoginī :Mārkaṇḍeya Tank Premises

In addition, the following female divinities are worshipped inside the compound of the Jagannātha temple.

26. Beḍhākālī
27. *Bāṭamaṅgalā
28. Kuṭāmacaṇḍi (Near Muktimandapa)
29. *Vimalā

(The asterisks refer to the eight female divinities that are referred to in the *Skanda Purāṇa*)

30. Sarasvatī
31. Kamalā/ Sāvitrī (Indrāṇī?)
32. Ṣaṣthīdevī
33. Kālī
34. Lakṣmī (Mahālakṣmī/ Gajalakṣmī)
35. Śītalā
36. Haracaṇḍī

Since the enumeration of the female divinities given by Sadasiva Rath in a temple map is misleading, I mention below a consolidated list along with the entries given above.

I. The Central Circle

1. Subhadrā, 2. Śrīdevī, 3.Bhūdevī

II. The Inner Circle: Nil

III. The intimate Circle

1. Vimalā, 2. Sarasvatī, 3. Kamalā/ Sāvitrī/Indrāṇī, 4. Ṣaṣṭhī, 5. Kālī, 6. Mahālakṣmī, 7. Bāṭamaṅgalā, 8. Kuṭāmacaṇḍī, 9. Uttara Durgā, 10 Indrāṇī / Bhadreśvarī.

IV. The Inside Cirle

1. Śvarṇabhairavī
2. Ghorakālī
3. Katyāyanī
4. Beḍhākālī
5. Pātāleśvarī
6. Bhuvaneśvarī
7. Yajṁeśvarī
8. Śītalā

V. Out Cirle

1. Dakṣineśvarī
2. Maṅgaleśvarī

VI. Outer Circle

Durgāmādhava

VII. Outside Circle

1. Viśveśvarī
2. Alāmbā
3. Saptamātṛkā
4. Bhagavatī
5. Banadurgā
6. Cāmuṇḍeśvarī
7. Haracaṇḍī
8. Vāselī
9. Vārāhī
10. Śyāmākālī
11. Dakṣiṇakālī

12. Uttarakālī
13. Kṛṣṇakāli
14. Bāṭakālī
15. Gachakālī
16. Rāmacaṇḍī
17. Rāmacaṇḍī (Bankimuhana)
18. Buḍhīmā
19. Kāmākṣā
20. Jhāḍeśvarī
21. Hātayoḍī
22. Maśāṇicaṇḍī
23. Śmaśānakālī
24. Jahnikhāī

VIII. Outermost Circle

1. Rāmacaṇḍī
2. Bāliharacaṇḍī

Besides, Rāmacaṇḍī is on the eastern seacoast and Haracaṇḍī is on the western side of Purī. Both of them are worshipped on the bank of the river confluences.

During the long course of time, mother goddesses have become an inseparable part of the festivals of Jagannātha temple such as Durgāpūjā, Rathayātrā etc. A detailed study would reveal the resons behind such a situation.

It might be that at the earliest period, Jagannātha temple had only one deity called Puruṣottama on the *siṁhāsana* (pedestal) and there was no female divinity there. The location of the *siṁhāsana* is such that one can have a complete *darśana* of one idol and half of two others at a time from the Garuḍa-*stambha*. All the three idols are not fully visible at a time from one place. The Dāsagobā copper plate inscription indicates this fact when it states: *prasādaṁ puruṣottamasya nṛpateḥ ko nāma kartuṁ kṣamaḥ*... etc. The word *puruṣottama*

used in singular number in the verse is indicative of the fact that probably the temple was built for Puruṣottama alone and not for the Trinity found at present.

Subhadrā, being first of her kind, is not worshipped any where other than Purī. Divergent opinions have been advanced by the scholars with regard to the identity of the goddess. The popular belief of the people is that she is the sister of Kṛṣṇa and accordingly she is treated as such in local belief, rituals and songs. Devotees like Sālabega praise her as the youngest sister of Balabhadra and Jagannātha. Though the word Subhadrā occurs in the tweinty third chapter of the *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā* in the context of Aśvamedha sacrifice, yet the meaning is derogatory. Therefore, it is difficult to connect that word with Kṛṣṇa's sister and with Purī. The word *subhadrā* with the suffix *kan* raises disregard for her.

Secondly, the traditional belief identifies Subhadrā as Brahmā, Balabhadra as Maheśvara and Jagannātha as Viṣṇu. But in the *pratiṣṭhāvidhi* of the Dārubrahman, *śrīkaṇṭhādinyāsa* is employed for Balabhadra, *keśavādinyāsa* is employed for Jagannātha and *kalānyāsa* is employed for Subhadrā. Again Subhadrā is depicted as *bhaginī strīpravartikā*. She is also accepted as the *śakti* of Śiva and female part of Viṣṇu. However, the local tradition discards it. Accordingly, a ritual is performed on the Herāpaṁcamī day when both the brothers go on an outing with the sister without being accompanied by Mahālakṣmī. Mahālakṣmī feels neglected and being furious starts for Guṇḍicā temple to see what they are doing. She finds them all enjoying the dinner. When she arrives, the door is closed. Her wrath knows no bound and she orders her servants to break the chariots and chides the attendants of Jagannātha. This living tradition testifies the view that Subhadrā is the sister of Jagannātha.

During the course of time two more female divinities, namely, Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī have come to the picture. Popularly they are identified as Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, the

two wives of Viṣṇu. Śrīdevī is Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth and Bhūdevī is the mother earth. In fact, the mother of wealth and the mother earth are the two aspects of Mahālakṣmī.

Vimalā is considered as the most important female deity of the *kṣetra* (*cf. Vimalā Bhairavī yatra Jagannāthas tu Bhairavaḥ*). She is the presiding goddess of Purī, which is one among the fifty two *śāktapīṭha-s*. Vimalā is worshipped as per the tatntric practice during the sixteen days long Durgāpūjā festivals.

As per the local tradition in vogue, when Jagannātha leaves Mahālakṣmī and proceds to the Guṇḍicā temple with Balabhadra and Subhadrā, Mahālakṣmī goes to Vimalā who gives a handful of sand charmed with *mantra*-s. Mahālakṣmī throws them in Guṇḍicā temple while coming back being enraged. As a result, all of them go back to Śrīkṣetra, because that is the *kṣetra* of Lakṣmī and Guṇḍicā temple is the place of Jagannātha. The role of Vimalā both in popular belief and practice is mystic. She is addressed as *mūlaprakṛti*. The *prasāda* that is offered to Jagannātha is offered again to Vimalā. Then only it is accepted as *mahāprasāda* by the *muktimaṇḍapa*. Even though there is no provision of offering non-vegetarian food to the Trinity, yet during the sixteen days long Durgāpūjā festival, animal sacrifice is performed in the Vimalā temple for three days in a very secret manner. Therefore, it is indeed very difficult to identify the true character of the goddess in an objective manner.

In this connection, it may be noted that the mention in the *Skanda Purāṇa* is misleading when Vimalā is treated as one among the eight female divinities who safeguard the *antarvedī*, i.e. the pedestal on which the three idols are installed. This clearly indicates that the eight female divinities were created for a particular purpose.

Mahālakṣmī

The case of Mahālakṣmī is different. In fact, she is Gajalakṣmī seated on a cross-legged posture and elephants

are pouring water on her from the pitchers. She has her own kitchen and food other than rice or *bālabhoga*. The temple architecture shows that the temple and the kitchen of Lakṣmī are located in the *vāyavyakoṇa*. This appears some thing mystic in character. Therefore, the temple of Lakṣmī may be a later addition to the shrine complex. There is no mention of Mahālakṣmī in the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

Bāṭamaṅgalā is worshipped under a *baṭa* or banyan tree on the way to the main temple and also behind the odiya matha of Vāselīsāhi. Sarasvatī, Kamalā amd Ṣaṣṭhī are in one temple in the main temple complex. The original names of these deities may be some thing else as far as the iconographic texts are concerned. For example, Kamalā may be the icon of Indrāṇī. Goddess Vāselī is worshipped in a place adjacent to the north-east wall of the main temple. It is strongly believed that a detailed study of these female divinities along with their iconography and religious observances would reveal their true nature *vis-s-vis* relationship with the Jagannatha temple.

9
Śrutadevī-s and Vidyādevī-s in Jaina Literature

Gayatri Rath

Introduction

Jaina religion, in its very elemental features, may be described as an Indian sectarian religion. Like Buddhism, it is held to be an off-shoot of Hinduism. Many Jaina-s still continue to consider themselves as members of the Hindu community, build marital relationship with the Hindus and take part in their festivals. Like all religions, it has three main sides: philosophical, ethical and ritualistic. While unfolding the pages of Jaina rituals, we come across several gods and goddesses.

I. Background

Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism are the main streams of religious faiths that have nurtured and influenced Indian life and thought through the ages. The antiquity of Jainism is shrouded in obscurity, According to the Jaina *Purāṇa*-s and *Carita-s*, their first twenty two Tīrthaṅkara-s flourished several thousand years before Christ. The origin of Jainism goes back to hoary past. It is recognized as older than Buddhism. Initially, Jainism was an atheist religion and therefore the Jaina masters were naturally reticent about the existence of god. But when the Jaina-s became idol worshippers in later periods, they started worshipping Tīrthaṅkara-s as gods as well as some female divinities. Jainisim is still a living religion in India and the temples of

the Jaina-s preserving the old tradition of image worship to a considerable extent provide us with ample materials for study. Especially, as far as Odishan culture and history is concerned, the Jaina temples and icons abundantly reflect the contribution of Khāravela towards its expansion. King Khāravela of Kaliṅga (2^{nd} -1^{st} century B.C), who was a devout Jaina, designates himself as *Bhikṣu-rāja, i.e.* 'the monk-king' in his Hātigumphā inscription.[1] The great king, in the twelfth year of his reign, after defeating the king of Magadha, brought back the Jīna image which was carried away by a Nanda king from Kaliṅga. Later he carved out a number of caves in the Kumārī Pravata (i.e. the Khaṇḍagiri hill) near Bhubaneswar and built a monastery at Pābhāra, not very far from these caves. The icons of some mother goddesses like Ajitādevī, Duritāri or Prajṁapti were beautifully engraved during 12^{th} and 13^{th} century A.D. at Khaṇḍagiri hills in Odisha.

II. Classification of Jaina Gods and Goddesses

The images in Jaina temple are generally arranged in order of precedence. As the number of Jaina divinities grew, a need to classify them was felt and it was done partly to systematize the pantheon and partly to lend facilities to the sacerdotal worship. The deities have been looked at from specific view-points and this led to various classifications. While some of the gods and goddesses worshiped by the Śvetāmbara-s are not acknowledged by the Digambara-s, the deities worshipped by the Digambara-s are almost unknown to the Śvetāmbara-s. There are variants in certain names in both the sects. In an early text of Jaina religion, namely, the *Ācāra-Dinakara*, we find that goddesses have been divided into three classes, *viz.*

(i) *Prasāda-Devī-s* or installed images

1. Epigraphia Indica, Vol. XX, 1929-30, pp.72ff., Art No.7, "The Hatigumpha Inscription of Kharavela", (Ed.), Hirananda Sastri, DGASI, New Delhi, 1983.

(ii) *Kuladevī*-s or Tantric Goddesses worshipped according to *mantra*-s framed by the preceptors

(iii) *Sampradāya-Devī*-s or class-goddesses.[1]

In this text the author describes the goddesses as 1) on dais, 2) in the field, 3) installed in a cave or in a palatial temple, either as a symbol of self-creation or creation of each man, 4) sectarian goddesses such as Ambā, Sarasvatī, Tripurā, Tarā etc., 5) *Kuladevī*-s such as Caṇḍī, Kaṇṭheśvarī, Vyāghrarājī *etc*. This, indeed, is an exhaustive classification of gods and goddesses. From this as well as from other references in Jaina texts like *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi*, *Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra*, *Dīpārṇava* and *Prasādamaṇḍana* it is clear that many Tantric goddesses have found a room in Jaina pantheon. We come across the goddesses of Tantric nature such as Kaṅkālī, Kālī, Mahākālī, Cāmuṇḍā, Jvālāmukhī, Kāmākṣā, Bhadrakālī, Durgā, Lalitā, Gaurī, Sumaṅgalā, Rohiṇī, Sulakatā, Tripurā, Kurukullā, Candrāvatī, Yamaghaṇṭā, Krāntimukhā etc.[2] In a Ms. of the Jaina collection in a temple in Baroda, B.C. Bhattacharya found a passage in which a further list of Tantric goddesses is given in the following manner: Gaṇeśvarī, Pretākṣī, Śaṁkhinī, Kālī, Kālarātri, Vaitālī, Bhūtadāmarī, Mahākālī, Virūpākṣi, Caṇḍī, Vārāhī, Kaṅkālī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Yamadūtī, etc. who are otherwise called *catuḥṣaṣṭi-yoginī-s*.[3] This predominant tantric

1. ….. तत्र देव्यस्त्रिधा - प्रासाददेव्य: संप्रदायदेव्य: कुलदेव्यश्च।
प्रासाददेव्य: पीठोपपीठेषु क्षेत्रोपक्षेत्रेषु गुहास्थिता भूमिस्थिता:
प्रासादस्थिता लिङ्गरूपा वा स्वयम्भूतरूपा वा मनुष्यनिर्मितरूपा वा।
सम्प्रदायेभ्य: अम्बा-सरस्वती-त्रिपुरातारा‌प्रभृतयो गुरूपदिष्टमन्त्रोपासनीया:।
कुलदेव्य: चण्डा-चामुण्डा-कण्ठेश्वरी-सरीसत्यका (? – सुशयना-व्याघ्रराजीप्रभृतय: : *Pratiṣṭhā-vidhi* of Ācāra-Dinakara
2. …… कङ्कात्यै नम: करात्यै नम:। काल्यै: नम:। महाकाल्यै नम:। चामुण्डायै नम:। भद्रकाल्यै: नम:। अम्बिकायै नम:। ललितायै नम:। कुरुकुल्लायै नम:। Ibid, The first name Kaṇkālī opens the clue as to how a great number of Jaina sculptures were exposed to view from the same named Kaṅkālī tila at Mathura.
3. पद्मावत्यै नम:। दिव्ययोगी महायोगी सिद्धयोगी गणेश्वरी। प्रेताक्षी शङ्खिनी काली कालरात्री निशाचरी। ओङ्कारी सिद्धवैताली….. चतु:षष्टि: समाख्याता योगिन्यो हि वरदप्रदा:।

element in iconography seems to be represented by the Śvetāmbara sect who, like the Mahāyāna Buddhists, developed by assimilation and invention, a tantric system of their own. The present venture sheds light on the mother goddesses like *śrutadevī* –s and *Vidyādevī*-s or the Goddesses of learning as found in Jaina literature.

2.1. Mother Goddesses as depicted in Jaina Literature

Like the Tīrthaṅkara-s, the Jaina goddesses have a similar type of depiction and iconography in Jaina literature. The concept of *Vidyādevī*-s or the Goddesses of learning is very much original unlike other concepts of mother goddesses found in Jaina iconography. *Vidyādevī-s* are sixteen in number. In no other Indian religion are the goddesses of knowledge so numerous, Besides, the sixteen *Vidyādevī*-s-, both the sects of Jainism admit into their pantheon, one *Śrutadevī* who is very akin to goddess Sarasvatī of the Brahmanical religion. She seems to be the leader of a band of sixteen *Vidyādevī*-s and her worship precedes the worship of other subordinate deties. The designation *Śrutadevī* means 'Goddess of *Śruti*'. *Śruti* refers to the *Veda*-s or the revealed literature preserved through oral transmission. The description of *Śrutadevī* as noticed in the Jaina texts brings it at par with Brahmāṇī (wife of Brahmā)[1] and Brahmā is known to be the instructor of the *Veda*-s. The Jaina-s, like the brahmins, observe a special ceremony to worship her on the *Śuklapaṁcamī* (fifth day of the bright fortnight) of Kārttika month, which they call *'Jaina Pañcamī'*. On that special anniversary day of the goddess of knowledge, the devout Jaina-s observe fast, worship books and install them carefully. The concept regarding the other sixteen goddesses of learning, if analysed, brings the Jaina Yakṣiṇī-s to the fore of discussion. This leads us to assume reasonably that the *Vidyādevī*-s were modeled after the Yakṣiṇī-s. The sixteen divinities under the name of the *Vidyādevī*-s are *prima facie*

1. ओं ह्रीं नमो भगवति ब्रह्माणि वीणापुस्तकपद्माक्षसूत्रे हंसवाहने श्वेतवर्णे इह षष्ठीपूजने आगच्छ।

supposed to be influencing the sixteen arts and sciences, but the texts of Jainism give a different clue that through their worship the devotee gets knowledge, character, religion, effort and mental qualities of many kinds.[1] Truly speaking, these qualities lie at the bottom of all education, whether literary, artistic or scientific.

2.1.1 *Śrutadevī* or Sarasvatī

The main Goddess of learning (*Śrutadevī*) seems to be identical with the consort of Brahmā, a Dikpāla, as described in this book.[2] The attributes of a lute, book and rosary are common. The vehicle swan is also characteristic of Brahmā. The substitute of peacock for swan, as made by the Digambara sect, agrees with the concept of Sarasvatī, who is also the river-goddess in Brahmanism. The Jaina literature, so extensive as it exists at present, has been presided over by this goddess. The goddess, as viewed by the Śvetāmbara-s rides a swan, has four hands bearing a lotus, *Varada-Mudrā*, a book and a rosary.[3] The Digambara texts seem to give the vehicle of a peacock to Sarasvatī.[4]

2.1.2.0 *Vidyādevī-s*

2.1.2.1 Rohiṇī

The description of this goddess, as in other cases, varies with the two sects. With the Śvetāmbara, she rides a cow and holds in her hands a conch, rosary, bow and arrow.[5]

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1. दृग्ज्ञानचरित्रपरेषु सूरिपुरस्सरेष्वप्यकृतादरो य: - प्रतिष्ठासारोद्धार
2. See, *Indian Images*, part-I, pp. 43-44.
3. श्वेतवर्णा श्वेतवस्त्रधारिणी हंसवाहना श्वेतसिंहासनासीना चतुर्भुजा।
श्वेताब्जवीणालङ्कृतवामकरा पुस्तकमुक्ताक्षमालालङ्कृतदक्षिणकरा।
Ācāra-dinakara, Pratiṣṭhākalpa, p.146 (Ms., Ramaghata collection, Benaras).
4. वाग्वादिनि भगवति सरस्वति ह्रीं नम: इत्यनेन मूलमन्त्रेण वेष्टयेत्। ओं ह्रीं मयूरवाहिन्यै नम इति वागधिदेवतां स्थापयेत्। :*Pratiṣṭhāsāroddhāra*
5. शङ्खाक्षमाला शरचापशाली चतुष्करा कुन्दतुषारगौरा।
गोगामिनी गीतचरप्रभावा श्रीरोहिणी सिद्धिमिमं ददातु। *Ācāra-dinakara, cf. Nirvāṇakalikā* (Ms., Agra Library)

With the other sect, she appears bearing the attributes of an urn, conch, lotus and fruit.[1]

Most of the *Vidyādevī*-s are in common with the Yakṣiṇī-s, worshipped as mother divinities, especially in the Digambara sect, *e.g.* Rohiṇī is the consort of Mahāyakṣa who attends upon Ajitanātha. From the text of the Śvetāmbara-s, it appears that she specially presides over art and music. The Digambara-s believe that by worshipping her, the devotees attain perfect insight.

2.1.2.2 Prajñapti

She is identical with the Digambara Yakṣiṇī of Sambhavanātha. Thus, we find that she has borrowed the vehicle of peacock from Yakṣa Trimukha who is Prajñapti's husband. The symbol peacock with lotus should be the characteristic feature of the *Vidyādevī*-s. The name might have been derived either from *Prajñapti*, meaning 'intellect' or from *Prajñā*, meaning 'Sarasvatī'. In her Śvetāmbara aspect, she rides on a peacock and holds a lotus and a *śakti*.[2] According to the text of *Nirvāṇakalikā* of the same school, she holds *varada*, *śakti*, citrus and *śakti* again.[3] The Digambara image should be represented as bearing a sword and a disc.[4]

2.1.2.3 Vajra-Śṛṅkhala

In Śvetāmbara scripture two forms of the goddess are mentioned. In one form she is seated on a lotus and carries a chain and a club.[5] In another form she is also seated on a

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1. विशोध्य यः स्वेष्टगुणैः सरागां दृष्टिं विरागश्च परां प्रचक्रे।
   तं कुम्भशङ्खाब्जफलाम्बुजस्था श्रिताच्र्यसे रोहिणी रुक्मरुक् त्वम्। *Pratiṣṭhāsāroddhara* (Ramaghata Ms.).
2. शक्तिसरोजहस्ता मयूरकृतयानलीलया कलिता।
   प्रज्ञप्तिर्विज्ञप्तिं शृणोतु नः कमलपत्राभा।
3. प्रज्ञप्तिं श्वेतवर्णां मयूरवाहनां चतुर्भुजां वरदशक्तियुक्तदक्षिणकरां मातुलिङ्गशक्तियुक्तवामहस्ताम्।
4. दृग्ज्ञानचरित्रपरेषु सूरिपुरस्सरेष्वप्यकृतादरो यः।
   तद्भक्तिकां त्वाश्यगतिनिलीनां प्रज्ञप्तिकेऽर्चामि सचक्रखड्गाम्।। *Pratiṣṭhāsāroddhāra*
5. सशृङ्खलगदाहस्ता कनकप्रभविग्रहा। पद्मासनस्था श्रीवज्रशृङ्खला।। *Ācāra-Dinakara*.

lotus, but has four hands adorned with *varada mudrā*, chain, lotus and chain again.[1] The Digambara text mentions only a chain for the deity.[2] According to the Digambara text, she grants to her worshippers excellent boons and life style.

2.1.2.4 Vajrāṁkuśa

The *Vidyādevī* of the present description bears the same name as the Śvetāmbara Yakṣiṇī of Anantanātha. Some symbols of the Śvetāmbara form and others of the Digambara form, such as sword, spear and goad are similar to those of the Yakṣiṇī-s. The symbol of an elephant, namely, the *Vajrāṁkuśa* meaning 'one adorned with vajra and goad' leads us to suppose some mysterious connection between this *Vidyādevī* and Indra. Her lute, as given by the Digambara-s, is only a symbol of Sarasvatī. She too has two forms according to the Śvetāmbara texts. In one, she rides on an elephant and bears the sword, vajra, shield and spear[3] as symbols. In another, she is riding on an elephant in *Varada-mudrā*, vajra, citrus and goad.[4] The Digambara-s represent the deity as driving in an aerial car and holding in her hands a goad and a lute.[5]

2.1.2.5. Apraticakra or Jambunadā

Apraticakra by name and symbols bears parity with the Yakṣiṇī of Ṛṣabhanātha. This *Vidyādevī* may have some innate relation with Vaiṣṇavī, the wife of Viṣṇu, as *Jambunadā* seems to have relation with Kaumārī, the wife of Kārttikeya.

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1. वज्रशृङ्खलां शङ्खावदातां पद्मवाहनां चतुर्भुजां वरदशृङ्खलान्वितदक्षिणकरां पद्मशृङ्खलाधिष्ठितवामकराम्।
   Nirvāṇakalikā
2. व्रतानि शीलानि च जातु योऽन्तर्वृत्यामनग्रो बहिरीहया वा।
   तद्भङ्गिमास्थाय विशृङ्खलास्त्रा पीता च तृप्तिं परिशृङ्खलेऽस्मिन्। *Pratiṣṭhāsāroddhāra*
3. निस्त्रिंशवज्रफलकोत्तमकुन्तयुक्तहस्ता सुतप्तविलसत्कलधौतकान्ति:।
   उन्मत्तदन्तिगमना भुवनस्य विघ्नं वज्राङ्कुशी हरतु ...... *Ācāra-Dinakara.*
4. *Nirvāṇakalikā*
5. ज्ञानोपयोगं व्यदधादभीक्ष्णं यस्तं भजन्तं श्रितपुष्पयानाम्।
   वज्राङ्कुशे त्वां सृणिपाणिमुद्यद्वीणारसां मञ्जु यजेऽञ्जनाभाम्। *Pratiṣṭhāsāroddhāra*

Peacock and spear are the common characteristics in this form.She rides on Garuḍa and all her four hands are armed with discs,[1] according to the Śvetāmbara books. She is called Jambunadā by the Digambara-s who represent her as riding a peacock and bearing a sword and spear.[2]

Similarly, their mother goddesses of learing are also worshipped as Puruṣadatta, Kālī, Mahākālī, Gaurī, Gāndhārī, Mahājvālā or Jvālāmālinī, Mānavī, Vairotī, Mānasī and Mahāmānasī in Jaina pantheon, They all have the symbols of peacock, swan, rosary etc, which fit with the characteristics of the goddesses of learning.

3. Conclusion

Thus, a closer study of the subject proves the unmistakable fact that many of the Brahmin divinities have been silently assimilated into the Jaina pantheon. Undoubtedly there was a need for them. Human mind ever seeks ideals to get realized into forms. Ideas of auspiciousness, prosperity, wealth, kingly splendour etc. found a direct outlet in the sculptor's art in the images of Gaṇeśa, Śrī, Kubera, Indra etc. The developed tradition and well-established images of the Brahmanical gods and goddesses enamoured the Jains as they might have been the subject of imitation of the Buddhists. Thus, they unconventionally welcomed them and admitted many of them into their worship as they are reflected in the tales of their saints.

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2. धर्मे रजद्धर्मफलेक्षणे च यो जन्मभीस्तस्य मखे शिखिस्था।
जाम्बुनदाभा धृतखड्गकुन्ता जाम्बुनदे स्वीकुरु यज्ञभागम्।। *Pratiṣṭhāsāroddhāra*

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10

Buddhist Goddesses of Knowledge in Odishan Iconography

Subas Chandra Dash

The cult and tradition of the Mother Goddess is not limited to the *Purāṇa-s* only. That has been covered by the non-Purāṇic religions such as Buddhism, Jainism etc. Among the various goddesses of Buddhism, Āryā-Sarasvatī, Prajñā-pāramitā, Cuṇḍa and Uṣṇīsa Vijayā are most important as regard the act of imparting knowledge and wisdom is concerned

Many texts of Buddhism highlight their features which are quite visible in the iconography of Buddhist *caitya*-s or caves. In Odisha we have various icons of the god of Knowledge and their female companions and they are abundantly available at Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri and Udayagiri.

This paper intends to throw some light on some of the Buddhist Goddesses of Knowledge on the basis of their depiction in Odishan Iconography.

Āryā-Sarasvatī

As we know, the Aryans settled down on the bank of the river Sarasvatī and worshipped this sacred river through the Vedic hymns. In the *Purāṇa*-s, Sarasvatī is a female deity of learning and wisdom.[1] This Brahmanical Goddess of learning has also been adopted into the Buddhist mode of Tantric worship. In Odishan Art, Āryā-Sarasvatī is distinguished by a stalk of utpala supporting a book in her

1. Bhattacharya, B., *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, p.351.

left hand. There are six images of Āryā-Sarasvatī at Ratnagiri shrine.[1]

She is depicted with a smiling face, wearing white garments and decorated with white sandal flowers. She wears a pearl-necklace and is adorned with various ornaments. She illumines the three worlds with the effulgence of light that emanates from her body.She is surrounded with four deities equally prominent as herself. They are Prajñā in the front, Medhā to her right, Smṛti to her left and Mati in the west. In Ratnagiri, Āryā-Sarasvatī is represented with a book in one hand and lotus on the other. One of the icons is in a standing posture included in a frieze along with other deities including Maṁjuśrī. Her right hand is lowered in *varada mudrā* and she assumes a graceful *tribhaṅga* style.

There are also two monolithic *stūpa*-s containing the icons of Āryā-Sarasvatī within a rich *stūpa i.e.* (No.16), which is situated to the east of the stūpa No.1 within a group of *stūpa*-s of similar type.While one of them faces towards the east, the other one faces towards the south-east.

In another case near cell No.15 of monastery 1, she is in *lalitāsana* on a viśvapadma with her right leg pendent. Her right hand, resting on her knee, shows *varada*, while the left hand, placed on the seat, holds the stalk of a lotus supporting a book. She wears a saree and a folded *uttarīya*. She wears a *yajñopavīta* and a *kirīṭamukuṭa*. She is surrounded on one side by a standing attendant and the other one is missing. The pedestal has a *sapta-ratha* design and is decorated with lions and ritual performances. This image is made of chlorite and can be dated back to the 11th centuryA.D. Another image, quite similar in style, is badly fragmented and the attributes are missing. Other images seen near the paved forecourt in front of monastery No.1 are badly damaged, but are quite similar to that of the earlier images.These images of Āryā-

1. Mitra, D., *Ratnagiri*, I.p.242.

Sarasvatī can be described as adaptations of the Hindu Goddess of Sarasvatī which is predominantly found in the Tantric worship of Buddhist icons.

Prajñāpāramitā

In Buddhist pantheon, Prajñāpāramitā occupies an important place. She is accepted as the personification of transcendental knowledge. She has been very well described in the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* which is accepted by various Buddhist *Mahāyānasūtra*-s since 5th century B.C.Her acceptance is seen in the *Sādhanamālā* where nine *sādhana*-s (151-59) describe the procedure of her worship.

It is described that one who worships should meditate on the navel the form of Sītā-Prajñāpāramitā as two-amed, one-faced and white in colour. Beautiful in appearance, with half curly hair, as sitting on the white lotus, holding in her right hand the red lotus and the book in her left, she sits in a *vajraparyaṅka* posture and is decorated with all sorts of ornaments.

There is a description of Prajñāpāramitā being two-armed and golden-coloured. She is yellow in colour (*kanakavarṇā*) and is very beautiful. She shows the *vyākyānamudrā* and two lotuses. She holds the figures of five Tathāgata-s on her crown and is surrounded by Buddha-s and Bodhisattva-s. She sits on a double-pedalled lotus.[1]

Among the existing Prjañāpāramitā-s all are two-armed which are seen in the riches of monolithic *stūpa*-s of Ratnagiri. The first icon depicts the goddesses seated in *sattvaparyaṅka* on a *viśvapadma*. Her hands show *dharmacakra-mudrā* with a lotus and a book. In *stūpa* No.41 from the group in front of monastery No.1 she is seated in *vajraparyaṅkamudrā* with a *viśvapadma* and her hands are in *vyākhyāna-mudrā*. These icons at Ratnagiri may be dated back to 11th century A.D.

1. Mitra, D., *Ratnagiri*, p.198.

Cuṇḍā

Cuṇḍā is another popular Goddess found in Odishan art. In the text *Niṣpannayogāvalī* she is one of the twelve Dhāriṇī-s. She is always endowed with the mystic powers called Dhāriṇi-s. In Ratnagiri, we find fifteen icons of four-armed Cuṇḍā. Devala Mitra[1] dates them to 9^{th} century A.D.Basing upon the object held in the uplifted back left hand these icons can be classified into two modes: i) lotus mode and ii) kamandalu. mode.

In one case, from a riche in a *druma*-slab, the uplifted left hand holds a full-blown lotus and a water-pot. The majority of the icons are stationed in riches of monolithic *stūpa*-s and can be dated between 9^{th} and 11^{th} century A.D.They all have their principal set of hands in *dhyānamudrā* with the palm of the right hand holding a small and generally flat vessel. The back right hand holds a rosary. Two of the icons are seated in *sattvaparyaṅkāsana* and another two in *vajaraparyaṅkāsana*.

There are icons having six arms and twelve arms in Udayagiri caves. Iconographically; *lalitāsana* is the common posture prescribed in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*. All Odishan icons hold a bowl in their principal set of arms and one of their right hands has a rosary. In some images, there is a book supported by a lotus.This exhibits the influence of tantric worship prevalent in the Mahāyāna sect at that time.

Uṣṇīṣavijayā

Jetty is of the opinion that Uṣṇīsavijayā is very popular in Nepal and Tibet and is considered to be one of the most ancient female deities. She represents, as her name suggests, 'intelligence of the most splendid and perfect degree' and in Japan she is looked upon as the deification of Buddha's Uṣṇīsa.[2]

In the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, she is considered as one of the

1. Mitra, D., *Ratnagiri*, p.245.
2. Getty, A., p.135.

twelve Dhāriṇī deties and designated as Uṣṇīṣavijayā-Dhāriṇi. She is two-armed and holds a viśvavajra in her right hand. She is white in colour and holds a jarful of moonstones. She may be either white or yellow in colour as per the *sādhana*-s and textual prescriptions.

The *sādhana*-s (No.s 191, 211,212) in the *Sādhanamālā* describe her form and accordingly she has three heads and eight arms. She is white in colour, resides in the womb of a caitya and bears the image of Vairocana on her crown.

One who worships this deity, who is three-faced, three-eyed, youthful and decked in many ornaments, appreciates white colour. The right and left faces of this deity are respectively of yellow and blue colour. Her four right hands display the *Viśvavajra* Buddha on lotus, the arrow and the *varada* pose and her four left hands show the bow, the noose with the *tarjanī*, the *abhaya* pose and the well-filled water-vessel.[1]

The three-headed and eight-armed form that appears in Ratnagiri (monastery No.2) has a bow and a rosary as its distinctive features. She displays *varada-mudrā* in her right hand and *tarjanī-mudrā* in her left hand. The image is most likely disloged from the riche of a monolithic *stūpa*.[2] She is seated in a *sattvaparyaṅka* on a *viśvapadma* with her principal right hand in *varada* and her corresponding left hand in front of her chest displaying *tarjanī mudr*ā. She is richly ornamented and wears a beaded *yajñopavīta*, has a third eye in the centre of each forehead, and each head is crowned by a tall *kirīṭamukuṭa*. In her background there are five Tathāgata-s. The image can be dated back to 10^{th} or 11^{th} century A.D.[3]

These are the prominent forms of Buddhist Goddesses of wisdom that are seen in Orissan iconography.

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1. Bhattacharya, B., *op.cit*. p.215.
2. Mitra, D., II. *op.cit*. p.307.
3. Donaldson. T.E., p.299.

Conclusion

From the above discussion we may conclude the following:

i. The Buddhists have adopted the Brahmanic Sarasvatī into their fold of tantric worship.

ii. The Buddhists believe that one who worships the Goddesses in deep meditation for a long time, gets vibration in the mind and visualizes the deity.

iii. A *sādhaka* who regularly devotes himself to such worship gets *siddhi* which is the ultimate target of his endeavour.

iv. When one attains *siddhi*, the goddess never leaves him and bestows all desired objects on him.

v. Odishan Buddhist iconography has a typical style which is reflected in the thoughts of tantric mode of Buddhist worship which many Buddhist texts acknowledge.

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11
शीतलादेव्याः सांस्कृतिकं वैचित्र्यम्

व्रजकिशोर स्वाईं

आगमपरंपरायां शीतलादेव्याः परमः प्रकाशो यदि वा अस्माभिरवाप्यते तथापि वैदिकपरंपरायामस्याः किञ्चिन्मूलसूत्रमास्ते इति निश्चित्य वक्तुं शक्यते। पण्डितैरामन्यते यत् शीतला मूलतः वेदोक्ता अप् देवता। बौद्धपरंपरायां ''हारिती'' इति नामधेयविशिष्टया देव्या सह अस्याः भावैक्यमस्ति इति प्रसिद्धिर्वर्तते।

अप्शब्दस्य अर्थो जलम्। वेदे (ऋ.वे. १०.१७.१०) श्रुतमस्ति यत् "आपो अस्मान्मातर" इति। सा मातृरूपेण अभिलष्यते। "उशतीरिव मातरः"। जलमौषधम्। जलं रोगशान्तेः कारणम्। सकलव्याधीनामौषधमेव जलम्। ऋग्वेदे पुनः श्रूयते यत् - "आप इद्वा उ भेषजीरापो अमीवचातनीः। आपः सर्वस्य भेषजीस्तास्ते कुण्वन्तु भेषजम्" इति (१०.१३७.६)। ऋग्वेदे पुनः श्रूयते यत् "आपो हि ष्ठा मयोभुवस्ता" (ऐ. १०.९.१)। जलमस्माकं सुखस्य आधारः। तेन कारणेन जलममृतत्वेन उच्यते - "अप्स्वन्तरमृतम् (ऐ.१.२३.१९)" इति जलस्य बहुविधगुणविषये रोगनिरामयी - प्राणदायिनी - शक्तिविषये च वैदिकाः ऋषयः सचेतना आसन्। तस्मात् हेतोस्तैः जननीवत् हितकारिणीत्वेन, अमृतवत् सुखप्रदत्वेन ओषधीवत् व्याधिविनाशकत्वेन च जलं स्तूयते। सोमस्य समीपे देवताभिः जलस्य स्तुतिः श्रुता। देवता अपि जलस्य गुणान् कीर्तयन्ति - "प्रशस्तये देवा भवत वाजिनः" इति।

आयुर्वेदशास्त्रे भण्यते यत् भोजनकाले परिमितं जलपानममृतोपमम्। भुक्तं द्रव्यं यदा जीर्णं भवति तदनन्तरं जलपानं बलविधायकं भवति। अजीर्णरोगे जलमौषधस्वरूपम्। किन्तु भोजनात् परमपरिमितजलपानं विषप्रदं भवति। उच्यते -

भोजने अमृतं वारि जीर्णे वारि बलप्रदम्।
अजीर्णे भेषजं वारि भोजनान्ते विषप्रदम्।।

इति । प्रचुरशक्तिशालिनः औषधस्य सेवनेन यत् न सिद्ध्यति, केवलं जलपानेन वायुसेवनेन वा रुग्णमनुष्यस्य ततोऽधिकदैहिक उपकारः साध्यते।

इदानीं प्रश्नो जागर्ति अब्देवताया: शीतलया सह सादृश्यं कुत्र ? शीतलाया: ध्यानमन्त्रे एतस्य प्रश्नस्य उत्तरमास्ते। शीतलादेव्या करे पूर्णजलकुम्भ: परिशोभ्यते। अस्मादेव कुम्भात् सम्मार्जन्या अमृतमयजलसिञ्चनपूर्वकं सा विस्फोटकादिव्याधीनामुग्रं तापं प्रशमयति। अयं जलकुम्भ एव वैदिकाब्देवताया: वैशिष्ट्यवाहक:। शीतला जलाभिमानिनी देवता। तस्या: अमृतोपमजलधारायां रोगविनाशिनी शक्ति- र्विद्यते। स्कन्दपुराणोक्तशीतलास्तोत्रे उच्यते यत् - ज्वरदग्धस्य पूतिगन्धगतस्य प्रणष्टचक्षुषो नरस्य जीवनौषधप्रदात्री भवति शीतला। शीतलाया: स्मरणमात्रेण गलगण्डादिरोगाणां प्रशमनं भवति। न केवलमेतत्। यस्य कस्यचन दुरारोग्यस्य रोगस्य प्रतिषेधकर्त्री शीतला प्रसिद्धा। तदर्थमुच्यते - शीतले तनुजान् रोगान् नृणां हरसि दुस्त्यजान्। शीतला उपासकस्य नाभिपद्मे हृत्पद्मे च ध्यानगामिनी भवति। पुनश्च उदके स्थित्वा तस्या: ध्यानं क्रियते - ''उदकमध्ये तु ध्यात्वा संपूजयेन्नर:''। एतत्प्रकारकस्य ध्यानस्य इदमेव तात्पर्यं यत् जलेन सह शीतलाया: एकात्मकतादर्शनमस्ति। जलस्य स्वभाव: शैत्यम्। अनेन कारणेन वैदिकी अब्देवता पुराणागममागत्य शीतलेति नाम परिगृहीतवती। व्याकरणशास्त्रानुसारं स्त्रीलिङ्गवाचकशब्द: अप्। वेदे सा 'मा' इति श्रूयते। अत: शीतला मातृमूर्त्या अस्माभि: प्राप्ता।

सेयं शीतला स्वकीयनाम्नोऽपारमाधुर्येण अस्माकं सविधे शान्तिमयी कल्याणदायिनी च। तस्या: शुभनाम्न उच्चारणेन अस्माकं कायमनोवाक्यानां शीतलावस्थोद्रेको भवति। एके जलातङ्करोगिण: सन्ति ये जलदर्शनमात्रेण आतङ्किता भवन्ति। तद्वत् शीतलाया: नाम -श्रवणमात्रेण केचन भयत्रस्ता भवन्ति। किन्तु शीतला न भयङ्करी न च सा सर्वनाशिनी। तस्या: कृते या भक्तिनति: प्रदर्श्यते सा भयमिश्रिता। यदि सा सम्यक् न पूज्यते तर्हि सा भयानकभावेन उत्क्षिप्ता भवेत्। मसूरिकादीन् रोगान् घटयेत्। समुचितभावेन पूजां संपाद्य तस्या: सन्तोष- विधानं करणीयम्। वस्तुत: मसूरिकादयो रोगा अत्यन्तं भीतिप्रदा:, कष्टदायका: प्राणसंशयजनकाश्च। किन्तु शीतला अभया आरोग्यदायिनी च। अस्मिन् रोगे रोगी केवलं शीतलद्रव्यं वाञ्छति स्निह्यति च। एतदर्थमस्य रोगस्य अन्यत् नाम शीतलेति।

शीतलाया: मूर्तौ काचिदभिनवा कला विद्यते। तत्र मस्तके शूर्पो धार्यते। शीतलादेव्या: सूर्पं गृहीत्वा ग्रामपरिक्रमणपरंपरा विद्यते। काचित् कुलसीमन्तिनी बधू: मस्तके मङ्गलशूर्पं धारयित्वा अग्रे सरति। तामनु देव्या: स्तुतिं पठन्तीनां महिलानामेकं दलं व्रजति। तदनु एकं वाद्यकारदलं वाद्यं वादयत् गच्छति। प्रतिगृहमेतादृशं दलं भिक्षां याचित्वा अटति। भक्तिमान् गृहस्थ: स्वीयसाध्यानुसारं यदा भिक्षां ददाति तदा तद्दलमितरद्गृहं व्रजति। अनेन प्रकारेण शीतलादेव्या: पूजायामेकं सांस्कृतिकं वैशिष्ट्यमास्ते।

शीतलाया: मस्तकोपरि शोभमानस्य शूर्पस्य द्विविधं वैशिष्ट्यं प्राप्यते। प्रथमत:

शूर्पस्य साहाय्येन शस्यानामावर्जनादिकं निराकृत्य शुद्धं धान्यादिकं पृथक् क्रियते। द्वितीयतः विवाहादिमाङ्गलिककृत्येषु शूर्पः प्रतीकरूपेण व्यवह्रियते। शूर्पस्य एतादृश्याः द्वैतोपयोगितायाः विश्लेषणेन शीतलायाः द्वैविधं माहात्म्यं बुद्ध्यते। वस्तुतः आधयो व्याधयः, शोकस्तापश्च, अकालमृत्युश्चेत्यादयोऽस्माकं जीवने आवर्जनापूर्णा मलस्वरूपाः। शीतलादेवी तदीयमङ्गलशूर्पेण तमावर्जनापूर्णमलराशिं दूरमपसारयति, तद् विनिमयेन अस्मभ्यं ददाति शान्तिमभयमारोग्यं दीर्घमायुश्चेति। तस्याः मङ्गलपेटिका सदैव जीवस्य मङ्गलवितरणाय उन्मुक्ता वर्तते। शीतलायाः मङ्गलवार्तां प्रतिगृहं प्रापयितुं भक्तिमती पल्लीपूजाहारिणी वधूः शीतलाया शूर्पं विधृत्य स्थाने स्थाने स्यापयित्वा तदीयपूजासकलं समाचरति।

अनन्तरं प्रश्न उत्तिष्ठति मनसि यत् किमर्थं शीतलादेवी स्वहस्ते मार्जनीं धारयति। वस्तुतः इयं सम्मार्जनी नरकस्य उन्मथनार्थं मन्थानयन्त्रविशेषा। सपत्नीताडने, वधूनिर्यातने अक्षमपतिपीडनकर्मणि च अस्याः अपव्यवहारः क्रियते अमङ्गलकारणया भार्यया। यदि शीतला मङ्गलमयी तर्हि तया एतादृशी अमङ्गलसूचिका इयं सम्मार्जनी केन कारणेन स्वीकृता? यस्याः सम्मार्जन्याः स्पर्शेन स्नानमनिवार्यत्वेन प्रतिपद्यते, केन कारणेन एतादृशमपवित्रं वस्तु तदीयकरशोभावर्धनाय स्वीकृतम्? एतादृशस्य प्रश्नस्य उत्तरप्रदानात्पूर्वं सम्मार्जन्या उपकारात्मकं कार्यजातं न विस्मर्तव्यम्। सम्मार्जनीशब्दस्य आभिधानिकोऽर्थो भवति शोधनी। शीतलायाः हस्ते सम्मार्जन्या विद्यमानत्वात् तदीयं माहात्म्यं सर्वाधिकं वर्तते। सर्वे यत् कर्म तुच्छबुद्ध्या परित्यजन्ति शीतला तत्कर्म स्वेच्छया स्वीकरोति। एतादृश्याः अतुलनीयायाः सेवायाः स्वीकारः न कयाऽपि देवतया कृतः, किन्तु शीतला अत्यन्तं परमा सेवामयी भूत्वा इमां सेवां स्वीकृतवती। संसारस्य यावत्योऽशुचयः, अमङ्गलानि, आधयो, व्याधयो वा तान् सर्वान् देवी सम्मार्जन्या दूरे निक्षिपति। यत् किमपि पापं वर्तते तत्सर्वं दूरे निक्षिप्य मनुष्यावासं कलुषमुक्तं स्वच्छन्दजीवनोपयोगि कृत्वा शीतला अनन्यसाधारणोपकारं विदधाति। शीतलायाः ध्याने, स्तुतौ, उपासनोपयोगिमन्त्रेषु वा अयं विषयो नास्ति। तापशान्त्यै अमृतमयजलसिञ्चनस्य सीमितक्षेत्रे शीतलायाः सम्मार्जनीव्यवहारप्रसङ्गः तदीयध्यानमन्त्रादिषूल्लिखितो वर्तते।

शीतला श्वेताङ्गी। श्वेतवर्णः सत्त्वगुणस्य प्रकाशकः। पुनश्च निर्मलतया, स्वच्छतया, स्निग्धतया, सुखप्रदतया च जलं सत्त्वगुणात्मकम्। जलस्य वस्तुतः कोऽपि गुणो नास्ति। किन्तु यदि केनापि वर्णेन जलस्य महिमात्मको भावनिचयः प्रकाशयितुमिष्यते तर्हि शुभ्रवर्णस्य आश्रयो ग्रहीतव्यो भवति। शीतला वैदिकाब्दैवतया साकं तादात्म्यं विभर्ति। तेन हेतुना सा श्वेतवर्णा सत्त्वात्मिका च। सत्त्वगुणस्य समाश्रयणेन रजस्तमोगुणयोर्विकारः प्रशाम्यति। सुतरां शारीरिकं मानसिकमात्मिकं जीवनं सुखमयं भवति।

शीतलाया: श्वेतवर्णत्वेऽपि सा दिग्वस्त्रा। दिक् शून्यतां ज्ञापयति। अत: सा विवस्त्रा आवरणहीना च। दिश: शून्यताज्ञापकत्वेऽपि तस्या: विपुलतया विस्तारो भवति। एतेन देवी सर्वव्यापिनी भवति। यस्या अपेक्षया अपरं किमपि बृहत् न भवति। या सर्वत्र परिव्याप्ता तां को वा आवृणुयात्? देवी शीतला प्राकृतदेवता न भवति, सा सर्वव्यापिनी, ब्रह्मशक्ते: आरोग्यमय: प्रकाश:। तत: सा दिग्वस्त्रा। भारतवर्षस्य ऋषय: तारस्वरेण प्रार्थयन्ते यत् - "सर्वेषां मङ्गलं भूयात् सर्वे सन्तु निरामया:"। मङ्गलत्वस्य निरामयत्वस्य च इयं सर्वात्मिका निरावरणमूर्ति: देवी शीतला।

शीतला गर्दभमारूह्य व्रजति। तदर्थं सा रासभस्था गर्दभवाहिनी चेत्युच्यते। गर्दभशब्द: मूर्खार्थे, अर्वाचीनार्थे, निर्बोधार्थे च बहुलतया व्यवह्रियते। एतादृशं जीवं समाश्रित्य सुखं शान्ति: मङ्गलं च न भवन्ति। एतदर्थं राजा बली पञ्चसङ्ख्यकं पण्डितं नीत्वा पातालं जगाम, किन्तु शतसङ्ख्यकान् मूर्खान् अर्वाचीनान् निर्बोधान् वा नीत्वा स्वर्ग गन्तुं नैच्छत्। महामतिना चाणक्येन उक्तं यत् ''मूर्खे दोषा हि केवलम्'' इति। एवं सति देवी शीतला इमं गर्दभं गृहीत्वा अस्माकं कीदृशमभीष्टं साधयति? वस्तुत: गर्दभस्य गौरवह्रासेन अनेके उत्साहिता भवन्ति। किन्तु गवेषकैस्तथा न क्रियते। गर्दभ: स्वपृष्ठे चन्दनकाष्ठस्य भारं बोढ्वापि चन्दनगन्धं नैव जिघ्रति न च आघ्राणं जानाति। (खरो यथा चन्दनभारवाही भारस्य वेत्ता न तु चन्दनस्य)। किन्तु एतेन निर्लोभता, निष्कामता, त्याग:, नि:स्वार्थपरता चेत्यादय: तस्य निर्बोधताया: परिचायका: न भवन्ति। किन्तु युक्तिसहकृतविचारे क्रियमाणे एतदेव वक्तुं शक्यते यत् नेमे दोषा गर्दभस्य, वरं सात्त्विका गुणा:। शीतलाया: करुणाया: आवाप्तये इमे गुणा अस्माभिरवाप्तव्या:। नि:स्वार्थसेवा, निष्कामकर्मसाधना, विश्वकल्याणाय प्राणमनसोर्विनियोगश्चेति इमे सात्त्विकमर्यादासंपन्ना गुणा: आवश्यका:। शीतलाया: वाहनो गर्दभस्तद्गुणेनैव गुणी तद्व्रतेनैव व्रती। समस्तविश्वजीवकुलान् उपलक्ष्य प्रभूतसंभावनापूर्ण: मङ्गलमयशूर्प: देव्या: मस्तके विद्यमान:। आदर्श: भवति भारवाही गर्दभ:, यस्य पृष्ठं मण्डयित्वा देवी शीतला प्रतिपद- मग्रेसरति। सकलजीवानां कृते माङ्गल्पप्रदानं निरामयजीवनप्रदानमिति कियान् भार:? अस्य भारस्य वाहित्वेन भारवाही आवश्यक:। गर्दभ: तस्य आदर्श:, भारवहनस्य भावप्रकाश:। किन्तु वस्तुत: भारं वहति शीतलादेवी। केन भावेन तं भारं वहति सा, तं भावं प्रदर्शयति गर्दभमाध्यमेन। समग्रसंसारे यावन्तो जीवा: सन्ति सर्वे भारवहनेन असन्तुष्टा: भवन्ति, खिन्ना भवन्ति, किन्तु गर्दभो भारवहने सन्तुष्ट:। सन्तानवत्सला देवी शीतला अस्मदर्थं कियद् वा कष्टं न वृणुते, किन्तु तस्या: क्रोधो नास्ति, विरागोऽपि नास्ति। सा नित्यप्रसन्ना।

मसूरिकारोगे प्रतिकारार्थं गर्दभस्य दुग्धमतीव आवश्यकम्। मनोबलमक्षुण्णं रक्षितव्यम्।

गर्दभस्य अयं विशिष्टो गुणः। गर्दभवत् धैर्यधारणं, स्वात्मपरितोषः एवं च कातरतापूर्णा भक्तिः शीतलोपासनायाः पृथक् पृथक् विन्दुरिति वक्तुं शक्यते। भारतीयसंस्कृतौ शीतला ऋणात्मकपरिचितिं प्रस्तौति न गुणात्मकपरिचितिम्। इदमेव शीतलादेव्याः सांस्कृतिकं वैचित्र्यम्।

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दशमहाविद्यासु काली

जयन्त कुमार त्रिपाठी

शक्तिदेवताया बहुविधासु मूर्त्तिषु दशमहाविद्या अतीव प्रसिद्धा। कतिपयेष्ववाचीनपुराणेषु तन्त्रेषु च दशमहाविद्यारूपं वर्णितमास्ते। आसामुत्पत्तिविषयिणी एका सर्वजनसम्वेद्या कथा वर्तते। दक्षयज्ञे शिवः सती च निमन्त्रणं न लब्धवन्तौ। पितुर्यज्ञं जिगमिषन्ती सती पत्या वाधा प्राप्ता। पत्युरनुज्ञामादातुं सा तस्मै दश विभीषणा मूर्त्तयो दर्शयामास। देव्याः दशविधं रूपं दशमहाविद्यानाम्ना प्रसिद्धतराम्। दशमहाविद्यानामानि तु -

'काली तारा महाविद्या षोडशी भुवनेश्वरी
भैरवी छिन्नमस्ता च विद्या धूमावती तथा।
बगला सिद्धविद्या च मातङ्गी कमलात्मिका
एते दश महाविद्या सिद्धविद्या प्रकीर्त्तिता।।'[१]

बृहद्धर्मपुराणानुसारं दक्षालयगमनात् पूर्वं देव्यास्तृतीयनयनात् वह्निः निर्गतोऽभूत्। देव्या रूपं परिवर्त्तितं यत्सा कालीति श्यामेति वा प्रतीयते स्म। तां वीक्ष्य भीतभीतो महादेवः पलायनपरायणः दृष्टवान् च दशसु दिक्षु दशमूर्त्तीः दशमहाविद्याः। दक्षयज्ञं गमनात् प्राक् काले दशमहाविद्यामूर्त्तिपरिग्रहकथा अवश्यमर्वाचीनकालीना। विष्णोर्दशावतारग्रहणादर्शेन कल्पिता। सम्भवतः विभिन्नगोष्ठीनां देवतानां विभिन्नस्थानेश्वरीणां वा एकशक्तिगोष्ठ्यन्तर्भुक्तकरणार्थमीदृशी कथा समुद्भाविता।

काली

काली श्यामा वा जनप्रियताया उच्चैरवस्थिता। शिवा सती स्वर्णवर्णाभां त्यक्त्वा

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१. प्राणतोषिणीतन्त्रे समुद्धृतं चामुण्डातन्त्रम् (३/९) - सम्वत् ३७४
(क) काली तारा महाविद्या षोडशी भुवनेश्वरी
भैरवी छिन्नमस्ता च सुन्दरी वगलामुखी।
धूमावती च मातङ्गी महाविद्या दशैव ताः।। - बृहद्धर्मपुराणम् (मध्य) ६/१९

अन्धकारज्ज्वलनिभां रुचिं गृहीतवती। तस्याः समग्रं शरीरं बभूव रोमाञ्चितम्। सा पीनोन्नतपयोधरा तीव्रयौवनमदेन महेश्वरमगणयन्ती मुक्तकेशा विवस्त्रा वीरत्वव्यञ्जक-बाहुचतुष्टययुक्ता देहभारेण तत्पर्वतं कम्पयन्तीव सती देवी अरविन्दायताक्षी श्यामा अभवत्।[१]

काल्या आविर्भावस्य वैचित्र्यमयी कथा पुराणतन्त्रे वर्त्तमाना। शिवस्य वक्षःस्थले दण्डायमाना या कालीमूर्त्तिः पूज्यमाना दृश्यते सा वर्णना बृहद्धर्मपुराणे न प्राप्यते। दुर्गासप्तशत्यां च काल्याः शिवेन शवेन वा सम्बन्धो नास्ति। शुम्भनिशुम्भयोः सेनापतिभ्यां चण्डमुण्डाभ्यां सार्धं युद्धकाले देव्याः कोपकलुषितभ्रुकुटीकुटिलमुखात् विनिर्गता अतीव भयङ्करी काली।[२] या करालवदना, खट्वाङ्गधारिणी मुण्डमालाविभूषणा व्याघ्रचर्मपरिधाना निर्मांसदेहत्वात् अतीव भैरवा, जिह्वाया ललनं चालनम् अवलेढुमिच्छा तेन भयानका, कोटरगतचक्षुर्विशिष्टा, सिंहनादेन दिङ्मुखानि आपूरयन्तीवाविर्बभूव।

उपर्य्युक्तवर्णनात् देवी काली न नग्ना शिवोरःस्थले दण्डायमाना न वा शवारूढा। सा तु निर्मांसा, कोटरगतचक्षुः। तन्त्रसारे कालीतन्त्रोक्तः मन्त्रः समुद्धतकालीध्यानमन्त्रत्वेन सर्वापेक्षया प्रचलितः। मन्त्रेऽस्मिन् देवी चतुर्भुजा, मुक्तकेशी, करालवदना, घनमेघतुल्यश्यामवर्णा, मुण्डमालाभूषिता, दिगम्बरी, वामहस्तद्वये मुण्डखड्गे, दक्षिणहस्ते अभयवरदमुद्रा, मुण्डमालानिर्गतरक्तरञ्जितकलेवरा, शवकुण्डला, शवशरीरच्छिन्नरक्त-द्वारानिर्मितकटिदेशमेखला, प्रभातसूर्यरक्तनेत्रा, दन्तुरा, शवरूपिणो महादेवस्य हृदये दण्डायमाना महाकालेन सह विपरीतविहाररता।[३] अस्याः देव्या नाम दक्षिणकाली। साधारणतः ध्यानेनानेन देवी सम्पूज्यते। किन्तु काल्याः मूर्त्तौ शवकुण्डलं महाकालेन सह विपरीतविहाररतत्त्वं नाक्षिलक्षीभवति। तन्त्रसारे सिद्धेश्वरतन्त्रादुद्धतध्यानमन्त्रे काली शवारूढा नरकपाल - कर्त्तृका - करा त्रिनेत्रा मुक्तकेशी ललज्जिह्वा वराभयकरा चतुर्भुजा मुहुः रक्तपाने निरता।[४]

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१. एवं शिवेक्ष्यमाणा सा त्यक्त्वा हैमीं रुचिं सती
बभूव तत्क्षणादेव ध्वान्ताञ्जनचयप्रभा।
एवं भूत्वा सती देवी श्यामा कमललोचना। - बृहद्धर्मपुराणम् (मध्य) ६

२. भ्रुकुटीकुटिलात्तस्या ललाटफलकाद् द्रुतम्।
काली करालवदना विनिष्क्रान्तासिपाशिनी।
विचित्रखट्वाङ्गधरा नरमालाविभूषणा।
द्वीपिचर्मपरिधाना शुष्कमांसातिभैरवा।।
अतिविस्तारवदना जिह्वाललनभीषणा।
निमग्नारक्तनयना नादापूरितदिङ्मुखा।। - दुर्गासप्तशती ७/५-७

३. तन्त्रसार (बङ्गवासी) प्र. ४७८

४. तन्त्रसार (बङ्गवासी) प्र. ४९०

पार्वती काली : किञ्चाधिकांशपुराणेषु हिमालयदुहिता मेनागर्भसम्भूता उमा पार्वती हि काली।

तान्तु नीलोत्पलदलश्यामां हिमवतः सुताम्।
कालीति नाम्ना हिमवानाजुह्राव कृते दिने।।
बान्धवैश्च समस्तैस्तु नाम्ना सा पार्वती।
कालीति च तथा नाम्ना कीर्त्तिता गिरिनन्दिनी।।[१]

जन्मदिवसे नीलोत्पलवत् श्यामवर्णायाः कन्याया नाम हिमालयः कालीति आहूतवान्। बान्धवगणेन पार्वतीति कालीति च नामभ्यां सा गिरिनन्दिनी प्रकीर्त्तिता। कूर्मपुराणे वर्ण्यते नीलोत्पलदलप्रख्या देवी जातमात्रेण पित्रे हिमालयाय स्वकं विश्वरूपं दर्शयामास। तद् दर्शनेन भीतेन हिमवता अनुरुद्धा देवी स्वं रूपं जग्राह।[२] वराहपुराणवर्णनानुसारं दक्षसुता वह्निना स्वशरीरमाहूतीकृत्य जन्मान्तरे उमेति कृष्णेति च नाम्ना प्रथयाम्बभूव।[३] सौरपुराणे निगद्यते दक्षबाला स्वदेहं त्यक्त्वा हिमालयकन्यारूपेण जननान्तरं नाम्ना कालीति विख्याता भविष्यति।[४]

पर्वतनन्दिन्याः कृष्णवर्णधारणप्रसङ्गे पुराणे मनोज्ञमुपाख्यानं विद्यते। तारकासुरवधार्थं शिवरेतसा देवसेनापतेः कार्त्तिकेयस्य जन्मग्रहणं प्रयोजनम्। शिवतेजोधारणर्थम् एकमात्रं महाशक्तिः समर्था। कठोरं तपो विना अमितशक्तेरर्जनमसम्भवम्। महाशक्तिधरस्य कार्त्तिकेयस्य जन्मनो बीजं गर्भे धारणं तपश्चरणमन्तरेण महाशक्तेः पक्षे न सम्भवति। विधात्रा हरपार्वतीपरिणयस्यायोजनं कृतम्। भाविनि काले पार्वत्याः गात्रवर्णं वीक्ष्य महादेवः परिहासं करिष्यति। तेन परिहासेन कुपिता सती देवी गात्रवर्णपरिवर्त्तनमानसा तीव्रं तपश्चरिष्यति। सुतरां ब्रह्मां रात्रिदेवीं पार्वत्या गात्रवर्णं स्वीयकृष्णवर्णेन रञ्जयितुमादेक्ष्यति।

सा काली सा चामुण्डा। काल्या युद्धयज्ञे महापशू चण्डमुण्डौ उपाहृतौ। देवी ! चण्डिका

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१. कालिकापुराणम् : ४९/४७-४८

२. नीलोत्पलदलप्रख्यां नीलोत्पलसुगन्धि च।
द्विनेत्रं द्विभुजं सौम्यां नीलालकविभूषितम्।। - कूर्मपुराणम् : पूर्वभाग : १२/१९८

३. स्वशरीराग्निना दग्ध्वा ततः शैलसुताभवत्।
उमा नामेति महती कृष्णा चेत्यभिधानतः।। - वराहपुराणम् २२/८
अग्निना दग्धत्वात् देवी कृष्णवर्णा अभूत्। कृष्णेति कालीसमार्थका।

४. त्यक्त्वा दाक्षं शरीरं च बभूवाचलकन्यका।
नाम्ना कालीति विख्याता विश्वरूपा महेश्वरी। - सौरपुराणम् ५३/१५-१६

कालीमादिक्षत्। हे कालि त्वं यस्मात् कारणात् चण्डं मुण्डं च गृहीत्वा मामुपागतासि तस्मात् कारणात् भुवने चामुण्डेति ख्याता देवी सम्पत्स्यते इति मनोहरं वाक्यमुवाच।[१]

उपनिषदि काली अग्निजिह्वा। अग्निसूर्यौ अभिन्नौ उक्तौ, देवतेजोजाता चण्डी रुद्रयज्ञाग्नि: दुर्गा च यक्षा अभिन्नता प्राप्ता तथा अग्निजिह्वा सूर्यज्योतिरदर्शनजनिता कृष्णवर्णात्मिका तेज: शक्तिरेकात्मिका, रुद्रस्य ध्वंसात्मिकां शक्तिं नीत्वा आविर्भूता महाकालरूपिणी रुद्रशक्तिर्महाकाली। दुर्गेव काली यज्ञाग्नि:। अग्निजिह्वा काल्या: लेलायमाना शिखा।

काली कराली च मनोजवा च सुलोहिता या च सुधूम्रवर्णा।
स्फुलिङ्गिनी विश्वरुची च देवी लोलायमाना इति सप्तजिह्वा:।[२]

महिषमार्दिनी दुर्गा विन्ध्याचलनिवासिनी विन्ध्यनिलया सिंहवाहिनी सुरामांसोपहारैश्च भक्ष्यभोज्यैश्च पूजिता। काली ललज्जिह्वा सीधुमांसपशुप्रिया।

शक्तिसम्बन्धितपौराणिकोद्धरणानां सामूहिकविवेचनानुसारं वक्तुं शक्यते यत् शक्ते: पौराणिकमहत्त्वेन वेदोत्तरकालीनधारणा व्यक्ता भवति। वैदिकरुद्राणीभवानीप्रमुखा: देव्य: स्वानुकूलदेवताप्रसिद्ध्या प्रतिच्छायिता: पौराणिका: शक्तयस्तु स्वतन्त्रा व्यापका: देव्य:। विष्णुशिवेन्द्रादीनां देवानां शक्ति: आसु सन्निहिता। किन्तु अनया आसां महत्तोपरि न व्याघात: समुपागत:। चण्डमुण्डशुम्भादीन् दैत्यान् हत्वा स्थानैरनेकै: पृथिवीं मण्डयन्ति।

काली न भयङ्करी साऽपि सौम्या। भगिनीनिवेदिताया: *Kali: The Mother* ग्रन्थोक्तदिशा Life is but a game of hide and seek with her (Kālī) and if, in its course, we chance to touch her feet, who can measure the shock to the divine energy that enters into us? Who can utter the rapture of our cry of mother?

जयन्ती मङ्गला काली भद्रकाली कपालिनी।
दुर्गा शिवा क्षमा धात्री स्वाहा स्वधा नमोऽस्तु ते।।

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१. यस्माच्चण्डं च मुण्डं च गृहीत्वा त्वमुपागता।
चामुण्डेति ततो लोके ख्याता देवी भविष्यसि।। - दुर्गासप्तशती : ७/७

२. मुण्डकोपनिषद् : १/२/८

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योगमाया : दुर्गा

पतितपावन बानार्जि

१. उपक्रमः

श्रीमद्भागवत - श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता - श्रीश्रीचण्डीप्रभृतिषु ग्रन्थेषु महामाया - महानिद्रा - योगनिद्रा -योगमायाप्रभृतयः शब्दा आलोक्यन्ते। एते शब्दाः साधारणतया 'दुर्गा'- र्थवाचका इति बुध्यन्ते, वैष्णवानां मतेन दुर्गा वैष्णवी। योगमाया विष्णोः वैष्णवी शक्तिः। अस्यां भित्तिभूमौ साहित्ये वैष्णवानां योगमायातत्त्वं प्रमुखतत्त्वं जातम्। का दुर्गा ? का वा योगमाया ? अनयोर्मध्ये साम्यमस्ति न वा ? एतद्रहस्यालोचनमस्य प्रबन्धस्य आलोच्यविषयः।

२. शब्द-व्युत्पत्तिः

(i) दुर्गा - दुर्दुःखेन गम्यते प्राप्यतेऽसौ दुर्गा[१]। दुर् + गम् + डः, ततष्टाप्। सा अपराजिता इति शब्दचन्द्रिका। दुर्गा नववर्षाकुमारी पूज्या च[२]। दुर्गा हिमालयकन्या, शिवभार्या, गणेश-कार्त्तिकयोर्माता पार्वती च। तत्पर्यायवाचकानि नामानि अमरकोष - शब्दरत्नावली - सहस्रनामादिषु दृश्यन्ते, यथा - उमा - कात्यायनी - गौरी - काली-हैमवतीश्वरी - इत्यादीनि। दुर्गानाम्नो व्युत्पत्तिर्यथा -

"दुर्गो दैत्ये महाविघ्ने भवबन्धे कुकर्मणि।शोके दुःखे च नरके यमदण्डे च जन्मनि।। महाभयेऽतिरोगे चाप्याशब्दो हन्तृवाचकः। एतान् हन्त्येव या देवी सा दुर्गा परिकीर्त्तिता।"

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१. शब्दकल्पद्रुमः, Vol.II, Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1988, p.727

२. देवीभागवतपुराणम् (3.26.43) - ''नववर्षा भवेद्दुर्गा''। दुर्गापूजाफलं (3 22.50) -"दुःखदारिद्र्यनाशाय संग्रामे विजयाय च। क्रूरशत्रुविनाशार्थं तथोग्रकर्मसाधने, दुर्गां च पूजयेद् भक्त्या परलोकसुखाय च।" तस्याः पूजामन्त्रो यथा - "दुर्गा त्रायति भक्तं या सदा दुर्गार्त्तिनाशिनी, दुर्ज्ञेया सर्वदेवानां तां दुर्गां पूजयाम्यहम्।"

पुनश्च -

"दैत्यनाशार्थवचनो दकारः परिकीर्त्तितः। उकारो विघ्ननाशस्य वाचको वेदसम्मतः।। रेफो रोगघ्नवचनो गश्च पापघ्नवाचकः। भयशत्रुघ्नवचनश्चाकारः परिकीर्त्तितः[१]।"

(ii) **योगः** - "योगः संनहन - उपाय - ध्यान - संगति - युक्तिषु"[२]। युज् समाधौ + भावादौ घञ्। योगः सूत्रमिति त्रिकाण्डशेषः। ''योगोऽपूर्वर्घसंप्राप्तौ सङ्गतिध्यानयुक्तिषु। वपुः स्थैर्यप्रयोगे च विष्कम्भादिषु भेषजे।। विश्रब्धघातके द्रव्योपायसंनहनेष्वपि, कर्मणेऽपि च।[३]" (संनहनं - कवचम्), (उपायः सामदानादिः), (ध्यानं - चित्तस्य एकाग्रीकरणम्)। ''योगः चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः'' - इति पतञ्जलिः। योगशब्दस्य उपायार्थे प्रसिद्धिः महाभारते द्रोणवधपसङ्गे एवं दृश्यते - ''एको हि योगोऽस्य भवेद् वधाय"। गीतायाम् अध्यायनाम्ना योगशब्दः संयुक्तः, यथा - अर्जुनविषादयोगः, सांख्ययोगः, कर्मयोगः इत्यादिः। तत्र योगशब्दस्यार्थः ईश्वरप्राप्तेः उपायः / मार्गः / कौशलं वा। "योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्" - इति गीता (२/५०)। योगी स्वर्गकामनां नरकभयं च त्यजेत्। योगः सृष्टिकौशलम् - "पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्" - गीता (९/५, ११/८)। तत एव भगवान् योगी, योगेश्वरः, महायोगेश्वरः - इत्युच्यते (गीता - ११/४, १८/७८)। योगः अप्राप्तस्य प्राप्तिः, समत्वबुद्धिरूपः - "समत्त्वं योग उच्यते" (गीता - २/४८)। श्रीधरस्वामिमतेन - "योगः - परमेश्वरैकपरता"। सिद्धौ असिद्धौ च समभावः योगः, निष्कामकर्मयोग एव समत्त्वयोगः, बुद्धियोगः, कर्मयोगः, तदर्थकर्म, मदर्थकर्म, मत्कर्म - इत्यादिशब्दैः उच्यते।

(iii) **माया** - माया तु शाम्बरी (जादूविद्या)[४]। विश्वं माति यस्यां, मिमीते वा। 'मा माने' 'माङ् माने' वा। मां याति वा[५]। इन्द्रजालादि मायायाः, "दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दूरत्यया। मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते।।" - इति गीता - (७/१४, १८/१६)। ''योग एव माया'' - योगमाया।

(iv) **योगमाया** - ईश्वरस्य ऐश्वरिकः योगः सृष्टिकौशलं भवति। तदेव अघटन -

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१. ''ततो दुर्गा हरेः शक्तिर्हरिणा परिकीर्त्तिता। दुर्गेति दैत्यवचनोऽप्याकारो नाशवाचकः। दुर्गं नाशयति या नित्यं सा दुर्गा वा प्रकीर्त्तिता। विपत्तिवाचको दुर्गश्चाकारो नाशवाचकः। तं ननाश पुरा तेन बुधैः दुर्गा प्रकीर्त्तिता।" - इति ब्रह्मवैवर्त्तपुराणम्।

२. अमरकोषः (3.3.22) रामाश्रमीटीका, चौखम्बा, 1970.

३. मेदिनीकोषः।

४. स्यान्माया शाम्बरी - इत्यमरः, 2.10.11

५. माया स्याच्छाम्बरीबुद्ध्योर्मायः पीताम्बरेऽसुरे - इति मेदिनी (1.6.46) शम्बराख्यदैत्यस्येदम्।

घटन सामर्थ्यम्। वेदान्तशास्त्रे तत् "माया", सांख्ये च "प्रकृति" - रित्युच्यते। अतएव योगरूपा या माया सा योगमाया। अत्र योगशब्देन मायाशब्द: समार्थवाचक:। शंकराचार्यमतेन - "योगो गुणानां युक्तिर्घटनं; सैव माया - योगमाया। त्रिगुणानां योग, स एव माया इत्यर्थ:। अथवा - मधुसूदनसरस्वतीमतं तु भगवतो य: संकल्प: स एव योग:, तद्वशवर्त्तिनी या माया, सा योगमाया"[१]। योगमाया भगवती, सा च विष्णुमाया[२]। भगवत: परा-अपरा इति शक्तिद्वयम्, पराशक्ति: विद्या, सा लक्ष्मी - क्रमशो राधिकास्वरूपिणी। अपराशक्ति: - अविद्या, सा दुर्गा, योगमाया, क्रमश: पौर्णमासी। गरुडपुराणानुसारं - "ममैव च पराशक्तिर्या सा विद्येति गीयते। नाशयामि तया मायां योगिनां हृदि संस्थित:" (२३५/५)।

३. शक्तितत्त्वम्

पुराणसाहित्ये ईश्वरतत्त्वस्य समन्वय: साधित:। विविधेषु मतेषु ईश्वरतत्त्वविषये ऐक्यमत्यं वरीवृत्यते। भगवद्गीताया: पुरुषोत्तमतत्त्वस्य प्रभाव: सर्वत्रानुभूयते। तत्र क्षरपुरुष - अक्षरपुरुषश्चेति ब्रह्मण: रूपद्वयं कथितम्[३]। क्षर: विनाशशीलसर्वभूतानि। अक्षर: कूटस्थ: जीवात्मा। क्षर-अक्षरयो: ऊर्द्ध्वभागे पुरुषोत्तम: परंब्रह्म परमात्मा स्थित:। ईश्वर: स्वशक्त्या विश्वं संचालयति। ब्रह्मण: शक्तिरेव विश्वपरिचालिका। सत्त्व - रज: - तमोमयी त्रिगुणात्मिका प्रकृतिरेव ईश्वरशक्ति:[४]। ईश्वरस्य अध्यक्षतायां प्रकृति: सर्वं प्रसूते[५]।

पुरुषोत्तमस्य शक्तिद्वयं परा अपरा च। पराशक्ति: गुणातीता स्वरूपशक्ति:, अपराशक्ति: गुणाश्रया। स्वरूपशक्ति: अवाङ्मनसो गोचरा, ज्ञानिनां ज्ञानैकपरिच्छेद्या। पराशक्तिसमन्वितं ब्रह्म - अक्षरब्रह्म, अपराशक्तिसमन्वितं ब्रह्म - क्षरब्रह्म। एकदेशस्थितस्य वह्ने: ज्योत्स्ना यथा विस्तारिणी, तद्वत् ब्रह्म तस्य गुणाश्रया - विस्तारिणी - शक्त्या "जगत्" - रूपेण परिणतं भवति। अग्निना सह आसन्नत्वहेतो: अथवा दूरत्वहेतो: यथा ज्योत्स्नायां

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१. शब्दकल्पद्रुम:, Vol. IV, p.57

२. *Ibid*, Vol-IV, p.57: "ततश्च शौरिर्भगवत् प्रचोदित: सुतं समादाय स सूतिकागृहात्। यदा बहिर्गन्तुमियेष तर्ह्यजा या योगमायाजनि नन्दजायया"। (भागवतम्-10.3.47) ''नाहं प्रकाश: सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृत:"।। (गीता -7.25)।

३. द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षरमेव च। क्षर: सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षरमुच्यते।।
(गीता 15.16)
यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तम:। अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथित: पुरुषोत्तम:।।
(गीता - 15.18)

४. "प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य संभवाम्यात्ममायया" - (गीता)।

५. "मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृति: सूयते सचराचरम्" - (गीता)।

बहुत्व - स्वल्पत्वभेदो दृश्यते, तद्वत् पुरुषोत्तमेन सान्निध्य-दूरत्वहेतोः अस्याः शक्तेः बहुविधत्वं दृश्यते[१]।

त्रिभुवनविस्तारिणी - प्रधानभूता-विष्णुशक्तिमध्ये सर्वव्यापी चेतनात्मा काष्ठमध्ये अग्नीव, तिलमध्ये तैलमिव विद्यते यथा - जलस्य तरलता, दुग्धस्य धवलत्वं, रत्नस्य ज्योतिः, सागरस्य तरङ्गः, अग्नेः तापश्य अभिन्नः, तथैव ब्रह्मणः शक्तिर्भवति। विष्णोः पराशक्तिःस्वयं विष्णुर्भवति। स एव स्वयं मूलप्रकृतिः[२]। तस्य कर्मसंज्ञक-तृतीया शक्तिः (परा-अपराभ्यां भिन्ना) अविद्याशक्तिरेव। अस्याः प्रभावात् अपराशक्तिः सर्वतापं भुनक्ति। एवं च विष्णुशक्तिः ह्लादिनी - सन्धिनी - संविदिति भागत्रयेण विभक्ता[३]।

विष्णुपुराणानुसारं विष्णोः परा शक्तिः मूलप्रकृतिर्भवति। ब्रह्मवैवर्त्तपुराणमतेन प्र - प्रकृष्टवाचकः, कृ - रजोगुणवाचकः, ति - तमोगुणवाचकः, ब्रह्म - विष्णु - शिवाः सत्त्व - रजः-तमोगुणा भवन्ति। प्रकृतिः त्रिगुणात्मिका सर्वशक्तिसमन्विता, सृष्टेः कारणे प्रधाना[४]। प्र - प्रथमवाचकः, कृतिः - सृष्टिवाचकशब्दः। या सृष्टेः आद्या सा प्रकृतिः। प्रधानपुरुषः परमात्मा योगेन आत्मानं द्विधा विभज्य दक्षिणभागे पुरुषः, वामभागे प्रकृतिस्वरूपा अभवत्। इयं प्रकृतिः ब्रह्मस्वरूपा, नित्या, सनातनी, मायामयी च। अनलस्य दहनशक्तिरिव यत्र आत्माऽस्ति तत्रैव प्रकृतिः तिष्ठति। इयमाद्याशक्तिस्वरूपा मूल-प्रकृतिः सृष्ट्यर्थं पञ्चधा विभक्ता जाता। प्रकृतेः प्रथमरूपं दुर्गा, द्वितीयं लक्ष्मीः, तृतीयं सरस्वती, चतुर्थं सावित्री, पञ्चमं च राधा।

भगवद्गीतायां प्रकृतिः भगवतः आत्ममाया इत्युक्ता। सृष्टिसमये परमेश्वरः मायया मिलितः सन् स्थावर-जङ्गमात्मकं विश्वं ससर्ज[५]। भागवतेऽपि तथा व्यक्तम्[६]। स्वशक्तिमवलम्ब्य स्वस्मात् सर्वं विसृज्य, स्वस्मिन् सर्वं संहरति[७]। या विश्वभुवनव्यापिनी

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१. द्वे रूपे ब्रह्मणस्तस्य मूर्त्तञ्चामूर्त्तमेव च। क्षराक्षरस्वरूपे ते सर्वभूतेष्ववस्थिते।।
अक्षरं तत् परं ब्रह्म क्षरं सर्वमिदं जगत्। एकदेशस्थितस्याग्ने ज्योत्स्ना विस्तारिणी यथा।।
परस्य ब्रह्मणः शक्तिस्तदेतदखिलं जगत्।
तत्राप्यासन्नदूरत्वाद् बहुत्व स्वल्पतामयः।। (विष्णुपुराणम् :1.22.53-55)

२. "विष्णुशक्तिः परा प्रोक्ता क्षेत्रज्ञाख्या तथा परा। अविद्या कर्मसंज्ञाख्या तृतीया शक्तिरिष्यते"।। (*ibid*: 6.7.61)

३. ह्लादिनी सन्धिनी संवित् त्वय्येका सर्वसंस्थितौ। (*ibid*: 1.12.69)

४. ब्रह्मवैवर्त्तपुराणम् - प्रकृतिखण्डं - प्रथमाध्यायः।

५. *Ibid*: ब्रह्मखण्डं, 1.2

६. लीला विदधतः स्वैरमीश्वरस्यात्ममायया - भागवतम् : 1.1.18

७. भागवतम् (2.5.4-5), श्रीपञ्चाननतर्करत्नसंपादितम्, कलिकता, सन, 1307.

भ्रमशक्ति: सा माया। या विद्यमानापि न प्रकाशते सा माया एकस्मिन् अनेकेषाम् अस्तित्त्वं वैकारिकं यथा शिशो: मृगतृष्णायां जलाशयभ्रम:[१]। विष्णुमाया द्विविधा - आत्मामाया, त्रिगुणात्मिका बाह्यमाया। त्रिगुणात्मिका - मायाया: विष्णुना साक्षात्सम्बन्धो नास्ति। आत्ममाया एव वैष्णवीमाया। एषा तस्य स्वरूपभूत न भवति। अत: लक्ष्मी: विष्णो: वैष्णवीमाया न, अनन्तशयने वैष्णवीमाया तस्य विष्णो: निद्राकारणं भवति। तत: सा निद्रा न प्रकृतनिद्रा अपितु "योगनिद्रा"। अनया वैष्णवीमायया देवक्या: अष्टमगर्भस्य आकर्षणं जातम्, यथा - "योगनिद्रा महामाया वैष्णवीमोहितं यथा। अविद्यारजगत् सर्वं तमाह भगवान् हरि:"।। विष्णुपुराणम् (५/१/७०)। कृष्णजीवनरक्षार्थं कन्यारूपिणी 'माया' कंसं छलितवती। भगवते एनां मायामवलम्ब्य कृष्ण: ब्रह्माणं मायाक्रीडामदर्शयत्। एषा वैष्णवी माया योगमाया एव।[२]

४. योगमायातत्त्वम्

भगवत: स्वरूपेण यतोऽस्या "योगो"ऽस्ति तत एव ''माया'' योगमाया इति ज्ञायते। सप्तशतीचण्डीग्रन्थे "महामाया" शब्दस्य प्रयोग: अष्टवारो दृश्यते। तत्रापि महामायार्थे योगनिद्रा - विष्णुमायाशब्दौ व्यवहृतौ। तन्त्रशास्त्रे महामाया - योगमाया - योगनिद्रा - विष्णुमायाशब्दा: समार्थवाचका:[३]। भगवद्गीतायां योगमायाशब्दस्य वारैकप्रयोगो दृश्यते[४]। अवतारी कृष्ण: योगमायासमावृत: लीलां संपादयति। श्रीमद्भागवते योगमाया - विष्णुमायाशब्दौ बहुश उल्लिखितौ। कात्यायनस्याश्रमे आविर्भूता महामाया कात्यायनीति प्रसिद्धा। एषा काव्यायनी व्रजस्य अधिष्ठात्री देवी। व्रजाङ्गना: कृष्णं पतिभावेन आप्तुं तस्या आराधनां कृतवत्य:[५]। भागवते सा देवी चण्डिका - भद्रकाली - नारायणी कात्यायनीति नामभि: निर्दिष्टा। केषांचिन्मतेन महामाया - योगमाया तु भिन्नभिन्नरूपा एव। वेदान्तस्य माया तन्त्रस्य महामाया न भवति। वेदान्ते मायाया: पारमार्थिकसत्ता नास्ति, अपितु व्यावहारिकसत्ता अस्ति। वेदान्त: सिद्धान्तशास्त्रं तन्त्रं तु साधनशास्त्रम्। वेदान्तस्य ब्रह्म तान्त्रिकाणां जगज्जननी महामाया। उपासकभेदात् ब्रह्म पुरुषरूपेण नारीरूपेण वा प्रतिभाति। अतएव रामकृष्णपरमहंसेन उक्तं - ब्रह्म काली, काली ब्रह्म एव।

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१. मृगतृष्णां यथा बाला मन्यन्त उदकाशयम्। एवं वैकारिकीं मायामयुक्ता वस्तु चक्षते (भागवतम् : 10.13.11)

२. श्रीराधार क्रमविकाश, श्री शशिभूषण दासगुप्त, कलिकता, साल, 1381.

३. श्रीश्रीचण्डी, स्वामी जगदीश्वरानन्द, उद्बोधनकार्यालय, कलिकता, साल, 1381.

४. नाहं प्रकाश: सर्वस्य योगमाया समावृत:'' - गीता (7.25)।

५. एवं मासं व्रतं चेरु: कुमार्य: कुष्णचेतस:। भद्रकालीं समानर्चुर्भूयान्नन्दसुत: पति: ।। (भागवतम् : 10.22.5)

भागवतानुसारं योगमाया श्रीकृष्णस्य समस्तप्रकटलीलायाः सहायिका, अर्थात् योगमायामाश्रित्य भगवतः सकलाः प्रकटलीलाः सम्भवन्ति। "विस्तारयन् क्रीडसि योगमायाम्"[१]। प्राकृतजगति प्राकृतमानव इव आचरन्नपि परंब्रह्म केनापि बन्धनग्रस्तो न भवति। लीलाविस्तारार्थं स स्वयं वन्धनं स्वीकरोति, परन्तु तदुपरि मायायाः कोऽपि प्रभावो न विद्यते। गीतायामस्या योगमायाया उल्लेखोऽस्ति। गौडसंप्रदायवैष्णवा योगमायातत्त्वमधिकतया प्राधान्यमर्पितवन्तः। तेषां मतेन योगमाया भगवतः स्वरूपभूता 'दुस्तर्का चित्शक्तिः', "दुर्घटघटनपटीयसी'' अथवा ''दुर्घटघटनी चिच्छक्तिः"।

५. श्रीकृष्णलीलासहायिका पौर्णमासी

भागवतमहापुराणे योगमाया श्रीकृष्णलीलायाः सहायिकारूपेण प्रदर्शिता। श्रीकृष्णजन्मावसरे सा यशोदागर्भसम्भवाऽभूत्[२]। परिश्रान्ता यशोदा निद्रयापगतस्मृतिः जातस्य शिशोः लिङ्गं नाबुध्यत। वसुदेवः नन्दालयमेत्य यशोदाशयने सुतं निधाय कन्यामुपादाय, देवक्याः शयने न्यस्य पूर्ववत् शृंखलाबद्धो बभूव। ततः परेद्युः जातमात्रां स्वसुः सुतां चरणयोः गृहीत्वा कंसः शिलापृष्ठे यदा प्रहरति, तदा तद्धस्तात् देवी (योगमाया) सद्यः अम्बरं गत्त्वा अष्टभुजा, दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरा, रत्नाभरणभूषिता, धनुः-शूल - इषु - चर्म - असि - शंख - चक्र - गदाधरा, सिद्ध-चारण-गन्धर्व - अप्सरः - किन्नरैः स्तूयमाना अब्रवीत् -

"किं मया हतया मन्द जातः खलु तवान्तकृत्। यत्र क्व वा पूर्वशत्रुर्मा हिंसीः कृपणान् वृथा"[३]। माया भगवती कंसमित्युक्त्वा बहुनामनिकेतेषु बहुनामा बभूव।

गोपबालाः हेमन्ते प्रथमे मासि हविष्यं भुञ्जानाः कात्यायन्यर्चनव्रतं चक्रुः। अरुणोदयकाले यमुनाजले स्नात्वा वालुकायां देव्याः प्रतिकृतिं निर्माय गन्धमाल्यैः धूपदीपफलनैवेद्याद्युपचारैः संपूज्य मन्त्रमजपन्, यथा - "कात्यायनि महामाये महायोगिन्यधिश्वरि। नन्दगोपसुतं देवि पतिं मे कुरु ते नमः।" (भागवतम् : १०/२२/४)

भगवान् गोपकुमारीभिः प्रतिश्रुतः आसीद् यत् आगामिन्यां यामिन्यां यूयं मया सह विहारं करिष्यथ। सा शारदीया शोभनीया यामिनी समागता। तस्यां सुखमयीयामिन्यां मल्लिकाकुसुमानि विकसितानि वीक्ष्य भगवान् योगमायां समाश्रित्य विहर्तुमियेष -

"भगवानपि ता रात्रीः शरदुत्फुल्लमल्लिकाः। वीक्ष्य रन्तुं मनश्चक्रे

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१. भागवतम् : 10.14.24

२. ततश्च शौरिः ... (भागवतम् : 10.3.47)

३. श्रीमद्भागवतमहापुराणम् (10.4.12), गीताप्रेस, गोरखपुर, विक्रमाब्द, 2043, p.405

योगमायामुपाश्रित:"[१]। "योगमाया" - भगवतो जगत्सर्जनार्था शक्ति:, दुर्गा इति[२]। The power of God in the creation of the world. योग एव माया। भगवत: जगत्सर्जनार्थायां शक्तौ भगवते रासारम्भे तदधिष्ठात्र्यां, दुर्गायाञ्च।[३]

कात्यायनी "योगमाया" वैष्णवसाहित्ये "पौर्णभासी" इति परिचिता। "कात्यायनी तु पार्वती। कषायवस्त्रविधवार्द्धवृद्धमहिलापि च"[४]। "An elderly or middle aged widow; dressed in red cloth" (Students Sanskrit-English Dictionary - V.S.Apte). पौर्णमासी नारदमुने: शिष्या, सान्दिपनिमुनेर्माता, जरती भगवत: लीलाप्रतानार्थं भूतले अवतीर्णा। श्रीकृष्णजन्मकाले नन्दनिलये सा नवजातं कृष्णम् अङ्के धृत्वा, आशिषा संयोज्य, अमन्दानन्दमविन्दत्[५]। योगशब्दस्यैक: अर्थ: प्रेम। भगवंत: प्रेमप्रतानार्थं या शक्ति: मायां रचयति सा योगमाया वा[६]। भगवत: तिसृषु स्वरूपशक्तिषु "सत्" इति ख्याता शक्ति: वासुदेवस्य सहायक - कार्यकर्मवर्त्तिनीति प्रकटिता। तस्या: शक्ते: निष्कर्षरूपिणी जगत्सर्जनकारिणी योगमाया बालिकारूपं गृहीत्वा श्रीकृष्णेन सह यशोदागर्भात् अजायत[७]। सा एव कर्मसंज्ञाख्या अविद्या मायाशक्ति:[८]। तस्या: परिचय:

१. Finding those nights adorned with full blown jasmines (even) in autumn, the Lord too (who has all His desires fulfilled) made up His mind to play, falling back upon His Yogamāyā (wonderful divine potency that supplies all the requisites for such play). [In verse 29 of discourse - XXII, the Lord promised to sport with the damsels of Vraja, who worshipped Goddess Kātyāyanī during the previous winter in order to secure His grace.] *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*, ed. C.L.Goswami, Gita Press, Vol.II, p.1173, Discourse-XXIX.

२. *A Trilingual Dictionary*, G.Mukhopadhyaya and G.Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1966, p.317.

३. वाचस्पत्यम्, राष्ट्रियसंस्कृतसंस्थान, दिल्ली, 2002, Vol.VI, p.478.

४. हैमवतीकोष:, 4.172-173, "उमा कात्यायनी गौरी काली हैमवतीश्वरी" - इत्यमर: (1.1.36)

५. व्रजयुवविलास, पतितपावन बानार्जी, भारतीयविद्याप्रकाशन, दिल्ली, प्रथमसर्ग:।

६. "स्वीयान् गुणान् प्रविततान् प्रवदंस्तदासौ तां प्रेमदामनुचकार च योगयुक्त:" -देवीभागवतम्; योगयुक्त: - प्रेमयुक्त:" - इति तट्टीकायां नीलकण्ठ:। योगस्त्रिविध: - ज्ञानं - कर्म - भक्तिश्च (भागवतम् : 11.20.6), शब्दकल्पद्रुम:, Vol.IV, p.50, योग: - सूत्रमिति त्रिकाण्डशेष:।

७. स्वरूपशक्तित्रितयेशितुर्हरेर्विभाति शक्ति: सदितीरिति हि या। तदीयसारात्मिकयैव बालिकाकृतिं भजन्त्या किल योगमायया'' - (व्रजयुवविलासम् : 1.29)

८. "विष्णुशक्ति: पराप्रोक्ता ..., क्षेत्रज्ञा जीवशक्ति:, कर्मसंज्ञाख्या अविद्या मायाशक्ति:, तृतीया चित्शक्ति: अथवा पराशक्ति:। संदेशे सन्धिनी चिदंशे संवित्, आनन्दांशे ह्लादिनीति" (विष्णुपुराणम्)

तत्रैव कृष्णजन्मप्रसङ्गे प्रदत्त:[१]। श्रीराधाजन्मकालेऽपि तत्र गत्वा सा आनन्दममन्दं लेभे[२]। एवं च बहुषु काव्य-नाटकादिषु श्रीराधा-कृष्णायो: प्रकटलीलाया: सूत्रधारिणीरूपेण योगमाया-पौर्णमासी सर्वं साधयतीति स्पष्टम्। भागवतस्य रासलीला- प्रसङ्गेण परवर्त्तिवैष्णवसाहित्यं पूर्णतया प्रभावितमिति नास्ति संशय:।

६. भारतीयसाधारणजना: बहुदेवतोपासका:। ज्ञानिनो बहुतत्त्वेषु एकमेव सत्यमनुसरन्ति। अनेके तत्त्वदर्शिन: अनेकतत्त्वानि सृजन्ति। फलस्वरूपं धार्मिकविश्वासक्षेत्रे शैव-शाक्त-वैष्णव-सौर-गाणपत्यादिसंप्रदायानामभ्युदय: प्रसारश्च संजात:। अत्र शिव-विष्णु-कृष्ण-गणेश-सूर्य-दुर्गा-काली-लक्ष्मी-सरस्वतीप्रभृतिदेवदेवीनां सभक्तिकं पूजा सर्वत्र प्रचलति। संप्रदायेषु मतान्तरे विद्यमानेऽपि जना: सर्वान् देवी-देवान् परमादरेण प्रपूज्यन्ति।

अस्मद्देशे शाक्तसंप्रदायस्य वैष्णवसंप्रदायेन समन्वय: संघटित: लक्ष्यते। वेदान्तशास्त्रे यथा माया ब्रह्म च, सांख्ये तथा प्रकृतिपुरुषौ, तन्त्रे शक्तिशिवौ, वैष्णवशास्त्रे लक्ष्मी - नारायणौ, राधा-कृष्णौ च तथैव शक्ति - शक्तिमन्तौ भवत:। एषा युगलचेतना श्रीराधा-कृष्णयुगलभावनाया: मूलकारणम्। अनयो: युगलमिलनस्य सूत्रधारिणी योगमाया - पौर्णमासी।

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१. तदन्तरे नारदशिष्यतां गता तदुक्तित: स्वीकृतगोकुलस्थिति:। इहावतीर्णा भगवत्तमोत्तम-प्रकाशिलीलाघटनाय भूतले।। व्रजौकसां गौरववाक्यगौरवादलंघ्यवृत्तिपशुपावकार्चिता। समुल्लसत्काशविकाशिकेशिका महानुभावा भवत्यनिन्दिता।। कृपामयी पूर्णिमया समाभिधाभिधावदाभीरजरद्वधूवृता। प्रसूस्तु सान्दीपनिवाक्यते: जवादविन्दत् किल नन्दमन्दिरम्।। सा व्रजवासिनामतिमर्यादास्पदा। गोपाङ्गनागणपूजिता अत्युल्लसित ...

-(व्रजयुवविलासम् :1.56-58)

काशनिकाशविकशितकेशराशिसहिता, महाशया ऐश्वर्यादिशालिनी भगवती, पूर्णिमातूल्याभिधानं यस्या: (पौर्णमासी) सान्दीपने: यते: जननी, करुणामयी नन्दानुरोधात् नवजातं कृष्णमाशिषा संयोज्य आनन्दिता जाता।

२. ''अथ प्रपन्ना सदनं तदानीं सा पौर्णमासी किल तूर्णमासीत्। जरद्द्विजस्त्रीणनसंवृतां तां हर्षात् सुतां दर्शयति स्म भानु:।। सा तस्य हस्ताच्च मुदा विहस्ता स्वारोहमारोह्यदाशु बालाम्। मुखं तदीयं सुखिताक्षिभृङ्ग्या व्यपोयताम्भोजमिवाथ हैमम्।।''(व्रजयुवविलासम् : 2.55-56)

xxx xxx xxx

"यावत् क्रमेण सहसा सहसालितर्षघोषेण बोधमधिगत्य मुदोपविष्टा। उच्चै: स्खलद्गतिरतीव विशंकमाना तावत् जवादनु विवेश च पौर्णमासी।।" (व्रजयुवविलासम् : 10.85)

"तां दृष्ट्वाथ ननाम सा (राधा) भगवतीं ....." आश्रुत्य मातृक्तमिदं नमन् स प्राहात्र मातर्विचिकित्सयालम्। यत् पौर्णमासी वदति व्रजेशीनिर्देशालेशाकरणेऽति दोषम्।

(व्रजयुवविलासम् : 13.39)

"श्रीपौर्णमास्यपि पुरं पुरत: समेतानन्दस्यवेशसमये व्रजसुन्दरस्य।
नान्दीमुखीमखिलवृत्तविदं सखीभ्य: श्रीराधिकां समभिसारयितुं व्ययुंक्त।।"

(व्रजयुवविलासम् : 14.30)

शिवपुराणमतेन विष्णो: शक्तिस्वरूपा मूलप्रकृति: जाता। सा एव प्रकृति: समग्रसंसारसृष्टिकारिणी[१]। पुरुष: नारायण:, प्रकृति: नारायणी अभूतान्। वैष्णवानामेते एव क्षर-अक्षररूपे भवत:। ब्रह्मवैवर्त्तपुराणमतेन दुर्गा एव लक्ष्मी:। सा विष्णुकान्ता षोडशकलात्मिका विष्णो: स्वरूपशक्ति:। इयं विष्णुकान्ता लक्ष्मी: कृष्णस्य राधिका। दुर्गास्वरूपा "सत्" - इति ख्याता भगवत: स्वरूपशक्ति: योगमाया पौर्णमासी श्रीराधा-कृष्णयो: अप्रकटलीलाप्रकटकारिणी। यथोक्तं कूर्मपुरार्ण - "इयं सा परमा शक्तिर्मन्मयी ब्रह्मरूपिणी। माया मम प्रियानन्ता ययेदं धार्यते जगत्"।।

वैष्णवानां तत्त्वानुसारं सच्चिदानन्दमयस्य भगवत: तिस्र: शक्तय:, यथा - १. अन्तरङ्गा - स्वरूपशक्ति: चित्शक्तिर्वा। २. तटस्था शक्ति: (भगवत: मायायाश्च मध्ये तटस्थभावेन विद्यमाना)। ३. बहिरङ्गा शक्ति: - मायाशक्ति:। एता: शक्तय: अव्यक्तावस्थायां ब्रह्मणि लीना: सन्ति। भगवति एव एषां संपूर्णाभिव्यक्ति:[२]। सत्त्वादिगुणेभ्य: पृथक् जीव: मायाबलेन मायावशीभूत: आत्मानं त्रिगुणात्मकमभ्युपगच्छन् तत्तद्गुणोत्पन्नान् अनर्थान् भुंक्ते। माया शक्तिरियं जीवं संसारं प्रति आकर्षति। अनया जीवो मुह्यते। परन्तु भगवान् एनां नियमयति। मायाशक्त्या दृष्टिदोषात् "आकाशे बहवश्चन्द्रा विभान्ति" - इति प्रकारकं ज्ञानं, चन्द्रग्रहणकाले "आकाशे चन्द्रो नास्ति" - इति प्रकारकं ज्ञानं जीवानां समुदेति। वस्तुत: अविद्यमानोऽयं संसार: सदिव प्रतिभाति। भगवान् स्वरूपशक्त्या जगत: निमित्तकारणं, जीव-मायाशक्तिभ्यां जगत: उपादानकारणं भवति। इयमेव मायाशक्ति: योगमाया पौर्णमासी भवति।

७. उपसंहार:

शाक्तमतानुसारं सप्तशतीचण्डीग्रन्थे या दुर्गा सा काली, सैव योगनिद्रा, महामाया च[३]। वैष्णवमतेन सा योगमाया पौर्णमासी च भवति। अत्र शाक्त - वैष्णवमतयो: समन्वय:

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१. इदं दृश्यं यदा नासीत् सदसदात्मकं च यत्। तदा ब्रह्ममयं तेजो व्याप्तिरूपञ्च सन्ततम्।।
कियता चैव कालेन तस्येच्छा समपद्यत। एकाकिनी यदा माया संयोगाच्चाप्यनेकिका।
यतो वै प्रकृतिर्देवी ततो वै पुरुषस्तदा ।। (शिवपुराणम् : २४ अध्याय:)

२. भागवतम् (61.41.34)

३. "तथापि ममतावर्त्ते मोहगर्त्ते निपातिता:। महामायाप्रभावेण संसारस्थितिकारिणा"।। (चण्डी : 1.53)
"तन्नात्र विस्मय: कार्यो योगनिद्रा जगत्पते:। महामाया हरेश्चैतत्तया संमोह्यते जगत्"।।
(चण्डी : 1.54)
"ज्ञानिनामपि चेतांसि देवी भगवती हि सा। बलादाकृष्य मोहाय महामाया प्रयच्छति।"
(चण्डी : 1.45)

साधित:, अतएव "चण्डीमगंल" - प्रभृतिशाक्तग्रन्थेषु श्रीदुर्गा श्रीकृष्णस्य कार्यसाधिका, लीलासहायिका इति रूपेण वर्णिता[१]। सर्वधर्मसमन्वयक्षेत्रे उत्कलस्य श्रीजगन्नाथमन्दिरे श्रीजगन्नाथस्य प्रसाद: श्रीश्रीविमलां समर्पित: सन् महाप्रसादपदवीं लभते। एवं च श्रीक्षेत्रे विमला, याजपुरे विरजा वा परमवैष्णवी दुर्गारूपा महिषमर्दिनी भवन्त्यपि योगनिद्रा, महामाया अथवा पौर्णमासी योगमाया भवत्येवेति ।[२]

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१. "विपदनाशिनी दुर्गा गाय हरिवंशे। कृष्णेर करिले कार्य भाण्डाइया कंसे"।।
"येइ जन नाहिँ करे तोमार सेवन। से जन कि हय हरिसेवार भाजन।।"
"शिवपूजा करे ये वा देवीपरायणे।
आपनि राखेन तारे लक्ष्मी-नारायणे।।" (चण्डीमङ्गल:- कविकङ्कण:)

२. ब्रह्मवैवर्त्तपुराणे शंकरं प्रति पार्वतीवाक्यम् -
"वैकुण्ठेऽहं महालक्ष्मीर्गोलोके राधिका स्वयम्।
शिवाहं शिवलोकेऽपि ब्रह्मलोके सरस्वती।।" (चण्डीमङ्गल:- कविकङ्कण:)
कृष्णं प्रति पार्वतीवाक्यम् -
"विष्णुभक्तिरहं तेन विष्णुमाया च वैष्णवी।
नारायणस्य माया हि तेन नारायणी स्मृता।।"(चण्डीमङ्गल:- कविकङ्कण:)
"कृष्णप्राणाधिकाहञ्च प्राणाधिष्ठातृदेवता।
महद्विष्णोश्च रासे स्वे जननी राधिका स्वयम्।।" (चण्डीमङ्गल:- कविकङ्कण:)

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